

**THE PIONEERS OF THE  
KLONDYKE**







Fsc

MR. HAYSI,

*The Narrator of the following pages, in the regular winter dress worn on  
the Yukon—See Chap. vi.*



# THE PIONEERS OF THE KLONDYKE

*BEING AN ACCOUNT OF TWO YEARS POLICE  
SERVICE ON THE YUKON*

NARRATED BY

M. H. E. HAYNE

N.C.O. OF THE N.-W. MOUNTED POLICE

AND RECORDED BY

H. WEST TAYLOR

ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN ON THE SPOT  
BY THE NARRATOR

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## PREFACE

ALTHOUGH it is unusual when two people collaborate in the preparation of a book to disclose the part that each has taken in the work, I think, nevertheless, that in the present case it will be only fair to the public; to Mr. Hayne, the narrator; and I will add, to myself, the humble scribe, to break the bonds of conventionality and state frankly the method we have adopted.

Well then, *imprimis*, Mr. Hayne is responsible for all the facts and details recorded from first to last. He gave me, with the help of his note-books to spur and correct his memory, a cinematographic account of his experiences from first to last during these two years' eventful pioneering: that is to say, he just talked, whilst I made notes of practically all he said. Our time was limited, and we confined ourselves to bare facts, and a few anecdotes, which, being all true, may rank as facts.

There our collaboration may be said to have ended. I then proceeded to put into a more or less connected form the various events which he had related, and for this portion of the work, of whose many imperfections I am painfully aware, I accept entire responsibility. The descriptive passages have all been founded on what I gathered during various conversations with him, and on the photos, whose exact descriptions I pencilled in under his direction.

But it is of the one or two reflective passages which I have ventured to introduce here and there, that I would especially make mention. The "first personal" method of writing, which, after deliberation, seemed to me the most graphic way of portraying the various incidents, as well as the one most likely to rivet the reader's attention, made it necessary that I should put all criticisms and reflections into his mouth. But I should like it to be quite clearly understood that whilst some of these are extended versions of what fell from Mr. Hayne's lips, the majority of them are the outcome of my own inner consciousness, and as such I accept full responsibility for them. I hope I have said nothing that can give offence to any one: if I have been so clumsy, I apologize beforehand.

I did not approach my subject wholly unequipped for the task. Before I first met Mr. Hayne after his return, I had made as exhaustive inquiries into the subject (for journalistic purposes) as it was possible to make in the days when all "news" was so largely romantic; and I accordingly knew something of the ground over which we travelled so rapidly, before we decided to undertake the work. I have altered nothing, I have exaggerated nothing. The most I have done has been to throw some of the incidents into slightly higher relief than they were in before, and bring certain details of fact or description into greater prominence than they occupied in Mr. Hayne's bare narrative of facts.

I have made no great effort at literary style; I have purposely related many of the occurrences of daily life in language almost as rough as their original surroundings. I have endeavoured to emphasize the most important events, whilst touching lightly on the lesser details of everyday existence. It has been our object to write a record which shall not only be a means of whiling away an odd hour or so, as children turn over the pages of a picture-book, but which may be of some practical use to those who contemplate starting for these regions, as well as to those for whom the authentic

history of the first days of any newly discovered country is always a matter of interest. We have tried to avoid the Scylla of relating nothing but a dry sequence of bare facts without falling into the Charybdis of a confused mass of irrelevant anecdotes. We have introduced a certain number of the latter, but we have endeavoured to select those which throw most light on the characteristics of the country and its inhabitants.

Finally, although I have kept closely to chronological sequence in the setting forth of the main events of the two years, I have not bound myself too narrowly in this respect in dealing with the less important ones. I have aimed at being "chatty," and, accordingly, some paragraphs may have been introduced in places where they seemed most apposite, and where they "carried on" the story most fittingly, rather than at the exact point in the narrative at which they actually occurred.

Greater objection will, perhaps, be taken to the amount of space I have devoted to the account of the journey to the mouth of the Yukon. But this was quite as much Mr. Hayne's idea as my own, for, it seems to us, it is only right that intending emigrants should know *all* the experiences that they will be called upon to face before ever they

catch sight of the glint of the gold they have gone so far to seek. This voyage, in the circumstances under which they made it, is by no means the least of the many perils to which a man must make up his mind, and the least that can be done by those responsible for an account which, I repeat, it is hoped may be of real service, and in some cases an effective warning, to those who think of starting along the same route—is to set forth as many, and not as few, of the dangers for which preparation must be made.

We would willingly have extended our first chapter to even greater lengths by speaking in detail of the alternative route—that *down* the Yukon from the head-waters—but the present narrator has had no personal experiences of that way in, and so we must be content to leave that task to a hardier spirit and a more able pen. The circumstance I most keenly regret is that an unexpected cable should have called Mr. Hayne back to Canada at a few days' notice before the MS. was finished, and that consequently he was unable to read the proofs.

But I see my "Vorwort" has grown to abnormal lengths, and I shall weary the reader who is still old-fashioned enough to wade through a preface, before he reaches the narrative. I will therefore

conclude by saying that if the perusal of these pages affords any one a tithe of the interest they have afforded me, both in their narration and their compilation, I shall feel more than satisfied.

H. WEST TAYLOR.

*London, 1897.*



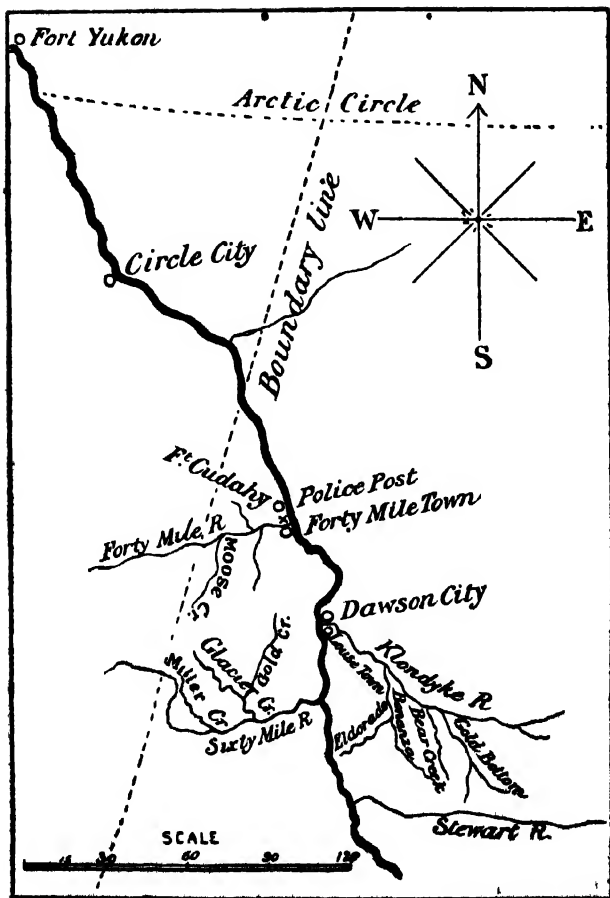
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SKETCH-MAP OF THE KLONDYKE DISTRICT,  
indicating the position of the principal streams and places mentioned in the narrative.

# THE PIONEERS OF THE KLONDYKE

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY—THE JOURNEY TO THE MOUTH OF THE YUKON

AFTER all that has been written and eagerly read during the past few months on the subject of the river Yukon and its tributaries, it is scarcely necessary to recall to mind the fact that mining has been going on steadily and quietly for the past eleven years in this neighbourhood, which has so suddenly sprung into fame—into existence, one might almost say—as “the new Eldorado.”

Nevertheless it will be as well to mention the fact here, for we shall be able to get a better notion of the remoteness of these regions if we bear in mind that although a certain limited number of miners had been at work for so long

—roughly speaking, since 1886—reports, of the arbitrary, and often indefensible, decisions on points of law and equity arrived at and enforced by the “miners’ meetings” took until the early summer of 1895 to filter down to the Canadian authorities.

Instances of these “unfair decisions” might be multiplied to almost any extent were it desirable to do so. One, typical of the rest, must suffice. On more than one occasion a man has been forcibly deprived of his claim—generally, be it noted, a particularly rich one, and therefore in some measure a Naboth’s vineyard—on the ground of seduction, though every member of the self-constituted court knew perfectly well, and the woman herself admitted, that she was of more than doubtful morality.

Reports of such gross injustice were now frequently coming in. At last the North American Trading and Transportation Company (who will be henceforth referred to briefly as the N. A. T. T. Co.) made certain representations concerning the alleged levying of unfair dues. The outcome of it all was that the Canadian Government decided to send a detachment of Police into the district to administer law and order—temporarily—“in the best way they could.” They received no precise instructions as to what they were to do, and no orders to enforce the liquor laws. Nay more, they were told not to

interfere in the matter so long as men behaved themselves, in spite of the fact that this was a Prohibition country. The narrator of the following pages was one of that number, and will from this point take up the story in the first person.

It was on June 1, 1895, that we set out from Regina<sup>1</sup> with orders to proceed to Seattle.<sup>2</sup> Our party was to consist of twenty men, of whom one was up there already, and others were to join us *en route* along the line. We started in the morning and ran through to Calgary,<sup>3</sup> which was reached early on the following day. There we had quite a reception, as we steamed in with the ensign flying from our carriage-window. Although it was 3 a.m., the whole population turned out to greet us. This town, essentially a "Police town," is the largest in the N.W. Territories, with a population of about 5000. It is the centre for the cattle and horse districts, and lies at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, which stretch away to the west. After some hours there, having been

<sup>1</sup> Regina is a town in the Province of Assiniboia, N.W. Territories of Canada, on the C. P. R. near to Qu'Appelle, which is now known as the seat of a Bishopric.

<sup>2</sup> Seattle, one of the points of embarkation for Alaska, is in Washington State, U.S.A.

<sup>3</sup> Calgary, a town of some size, on Bow River, lower down the C. P. R., in the province of Alberta.—H. W. T.

joined by other members of the detachment, we all went on board the cars again to the strains of the Police Band, who played us off with the "Girl I left behind me" and "For Auld Lang Syne." The train steamed out into the heart of the Rockies amid the shouts and wavings of the entire population, who had again turned out,—this time to wish us "God speed" on our long journey. We were most of us known personally to many of them—I myself had been previously stationed there for two years—and our trip, besides being an extensive one, was somewhat of a new departure,—all of which accounts for the popular enthusiasm.

After leaving Calgary we came at once into the heart of some of the finest scenery in the world. There is no more beautiful trip than that made by the C. P. R. through the Rockies from Calgary onwards to the Pacific. Close by the line rise the "Three Sisters," three abrupt rocks towering side by side into the sky, their peaks mirrored in the still lake at their feet. On through Bow River Valley with its circlet of frowning precipices; on past Tunnel Mountain and Banff Springs, we suddenly find ourselves clinging, as it were, to a chiselbank, while literally at our feet the waters twist and struggle and lash themselves into foam as they swirl through the narrow channel of "Lower Kicking-Horse Cañon."



## *JOURNEY TO MOUTH OF THE YUKON* 1

Further on again we just catch a glimpse of the gigantic Ice Grotto of the Great Glacier of the Selkirks (beside which a tall man appears but as a midget), before we are carried up and up and up to the top of a sheer precipice of bare rock, with here and there a pine clinging tenaciously to a mere ledge in the rock, and look shudderingly down into the abyss of Albert Cañon, and hear the torrent roaring and chafing between its prison walls thousands of feet below. After this it is a positive relief to wind our way along through the more expansive and less magnificently abrupt beauties of the Fraser Cañon, watching the smoke from an Indian salmon camp float lazily upward into the air while the horses graze peacefully at the water's-edge; until having passed along close beside the river at the mouth of this Cañon—one of the most exquisite bits of the whole route—we realize that we are leaving the Rockies far away behind us, and with every throb of the engine approaching nearer and nearer to our destination.

After two days of such scenery, whose beauties cannot be more than faintly recalled in words, we arrived at Seattle on the evening of June 3, having travelled through in the same car all the way from Regina. The whole of the next day was spent in Seattle, where we received a very cordial reception from the American inhabitants, who were most hospitable to us. It is a nice town, of fair size

and prettily situated at the head of the Juan de Fuca Strait.

On the evening of June 5 we embarked on board the s.s. *Excelsior*, bound for Alaska and the Yukon. An amusing scene took place just as we were starting. The steamer was a "tramp," who had been chartered by the N. A. T. T. Co., and was undoubtedly over-loaded and over-crowded. She was under 1000 tons burden, and in addition to ourselves with all our Government outfit, and a year's provisions, there were a number of miners and their freight. Altogether there were sixty-five passengers all told; and certainly she would never have been allowed to leave any English port laden as she then was. The accommodation also was far from good. One man, who had intended going by her, was left behind on the jetty. He thereupon started abusing everybody and everything in a most comical fashion, taking for his text the obvious over-crowding on board. "I know all about shipping," we could hear him shouting, "far more than any of you; and I tell you that boat is over-crowded, and it's very thankful I am not to be on board her!" which was perhaps rather a burst of eloquence than the strict truth. However, he became so noisy and abusive that the authorities had at last to interfere. This he appeared to resent very keenly, for he emphasized his objections in a practical manner by promptly

knocking two men down and sending a third's hat skimming out on the water.

"I'm a Canadian by birth," were the last words we heard as we got under way, "and there's Canadians on board that boat, and I'm not going to stand here and see my fellow-countrymen all drowned without raising my voice in protest. . . ." But his further eloquence was brought to an abrupt and wholesome termination by his being unceremoniously sent off in search of the hat he had just knocked into the water.

It was a beautiful evening when we started, and everybody was (so far) a "first-class sailor"—from the doctor's, not the Company's, point of view. We had a temporary erection on the deck—a big cabin to ourselves—and messed all together in the saloon. It was certainly a matter for congratulation that we had no really rough weather on that voyage, for the first big sea that swept over the deck would inevitably have washed our "accommodation," and possibly ourselves, overboard beyond all hope of recovery.

When we woke next morning we were rounding Cape Flattery.<sup>1</sup> We were now in the open Pacific—a fact which was duly notified to us by a freshening of the wind. A slight head-wind that next

<sup>1</sup> Cape Flattery, U.S.A., is at the mouth of Juan de Fuca Strait, facing Vancouver Island, and is therefore the last point of the mainland seen after leaving Seattle.—H. W. T.

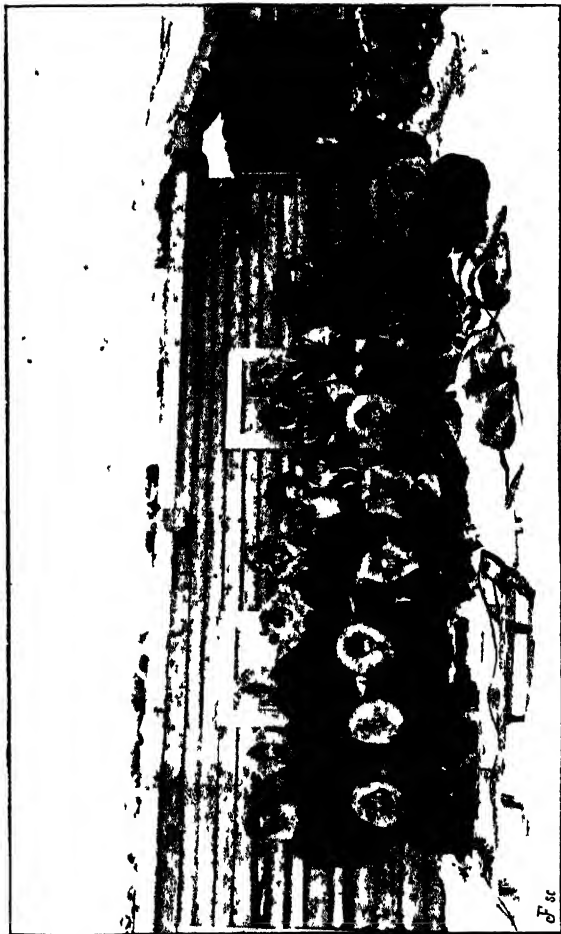
caught us made things a bit nasty for the steamer, and some of our "first-class sailors" suddenly and very ignobly fell from their high estate, and proved themselves, so to speak, "no class at all." The weather was not really rough, or, as I have said, it would have been a bad look-out for our deck-house; but the over-laden state of the steamer caused her to roll very considerably on the slightest provocation. This gave rise to a very funny incident.

One of our men, a great burly Irishman, was sleeping in a top bunk when the boat gave an extra roll which pitched him out of his bunk on to the deck. The fall woke him, and he was on his feet in an instant, thinking that he had been the victim of a practical joke as a result of having overslept himself.

"Who done that?" he roared, squaring himself up to fight any or every one who might have had a hand in it. But just at that moment the vessel gave a great lurch over to the other side, and Pat was fired up against the opposite bunk. The true inwardness of the situation then struck him, for he climbed back into his own bunk, exclaiming—

"Faix, she is travelling unaisy!"

There were many little incidents of this nature which occurred to relieve the monotony of the voyage.



THE POLICE DETACHMENT IN WINTER UNIFORM (noting dogs harnessed to sleigh) — Page 8



## JOURNEY TO MOUTH OF THE YUKON

I have already mentioned that we were carrying the Government outfit, which, naturally, included many things which an ordinary miner would not be able to take up with him. For instance, we took a complete outfit of everything necessary for setting up a permanent establishment, including portable stoves; window-sashes, ready for insertion with panes complete; all the tools necessary for building, hinges, nails, axes, etc., besides a complete year's provisions and tobacco. Of our clothing I shall speak later when we come to the account of the first winter. But it will be as well, whilst on the subject of outfit, to give a more or less complete list of the things which any man going into the district should take with him.

In the first place, then, a miner should take two or three pairs of blankets. He will wear, when at work, a suit of blanket clothing—a 'yellow "Mackinau suit,"—so named after a town in Michigan State. If he knows his business he will take up the roughest of everything, two heavy blue or red flannel shirts; *woollen* underclothing, generally made from pure flannel, not woven material, always red or dark blue; thigh boots, with a pair of "lace-ups" for occasional wear as a relief to the feet; and a suit of oil-skin and a sou'-wester, for rain is both heavy and abundant.

Bacon, beans, and canned stuffs are the staple food, but after a man has been up there a year or

two he is seldom on speaking terms with the domestic pig!

Coming to the question of tools, the following will be found to be a fairly comprehensive list :

Pick.

Long-handled shovel.

Gold-pan.

Axe.

Three augurs,  $\frac{1}{2}$ -in., 1 in.,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in.

With an axe and augur a man can do practically anything short of building sluice-boxes.

Those who propose going in by the other route—starting from Juneau and proceeding through the Lynn Channel, across either the White Pass or the dangerous Chilkat Pass, and so on through the long line of lakes in which the Yukon has its source, with the intention of striking the head-waters of the river and going *down* it, instead of up from St. Michael's—will have to take, in addition to the above, a complete set of boat-building tools, for there are no steamers on this route as there are on the other. For this purpose they will require:

Plane.

Tri-square.

Builder's-square.

Whipsaw (for whipping boards from the log).

Hand cross-cut saw.



Rip-saw.

Chalk-line.

Claw-hammer.

*Wire* nails (no others are used in this district).

Pitch.

Oakum.

These things will form a very serious addition to a man's baggage, and it must be also borne in mind that the dangers and difficulties of crossing the Chilkat Pass have scarcely been exaggerated. Very few animals can live there, and to get in by this route in winter a man would have to do at least 800 miles on snow-shoes, for he could not possibly carry the necessary tools for boat-building, even were the river not blocked by ice. Even when the head-waters are open it is a long and trying journey through the lakes, and there is always a strong wind blowing down the Pass. To be caught in a storm there means certain death unless shelter can be almost immediately reached.

But to return to our journey. We were ten days between Seattle and Unalashka.<sup>1</sup> There were no storms, though the ship rolled considerably.

<sup>1</sup> Unalashka is one of the Aleutian Islands, a scattered group which may practically be described as forming a barrier between the North Pacific Ocean and the Behring Sea—between parallels 52° and 55°, and stretching from about meridian 165° to 185°.—H. W. T.

One of the passengers—an American ex-Marine—was horribly sick. I never saw such sickness in my life. He was a guileless individual, who believed anything that was told him. Some one had actually managed to convince him that if he were to eat any amount of lettuce, young turnips, etc., he would keep off the *mal de mer*. We accordingly found him hidden under a large tarpaulin, stuffing himself for dear life on all sorts of green stuff and raw vegetables, and the more he ate the worse he became—naturally. However, he firmly believed that he was in possession of a “certain cure” if he only ate enough, and nothing would drive that idea out of his head when once it was firmly implanted there. He was naturally the butt of the whole ship.

“Have you heard that long, low, whistling sound inside you, M——?” asked one man, going up to him with a preternaturally solemn face.

“No,” he answered feebly, “what is it?”

“What! you don’t know? It’s a sure sign that you’re near the end. A sort of warning to get ready for the last trip. You’ll be hearing it soon. We’ll miss you, M——, and you’ll be a great loss to the American Navy.”

The poor man’s face turned a degree whiter than before. He firmly believed it, and every one afterwards made a point of asking him a dozen times a day if he had heard the whistling yet!

He was the more amusing because through it all he was insatiably greedy. He never missed a meal. He would come in, sit down for two minutes, during which he would get through as much food as an ordinary man would lower in fifteen, and then bolt for the ship's side amidst a storm of laughter. He kept this up the whole time till we reached Unalashka, where he landed. His statement that he had been a Marine, coupled with the fact that the weather was perfectly fine the whole way, added increased zest to the joke.

When we got into fifty fathoms off the Aleutians, a thick fog settled down and we had no idea where we were. This voyage is out of the run of ordinary vessels; we had no chart; there were no lighthouses; pilots were unknown, and the navigation is extremely difficult. In addition to all this our skipper had never done the voyage before, and the boat was over-laden. All we could do was to steam about in the fog, incessantly taking soundings. We discovered afterwards that it is deep water right up to the rock.

We amused ourselves with fishing with deep-sea lines—in fifty fathoms of water—and we caught large numbers of the most beautiful cod. We all agreed it was the daintiest fish we had ever tasted. They are entirely different to those caught in shallow water, and came up quite easily.

We had arrived off the Aleutians on June 14.

When the fog lifted—quite suddenly—we saw four American revenue cutters from the Behring Sea, and discovered that we were within a quarter of a mile of sheer rock. We spent some hours looking for the "Priest Rock," which was our only guide for getting in. At last we discovered it, and steamed into and cast anchor in a fine, natural, land-locked harbour.

There are two trading settlements in these islands—the Alaska Commercial Company (hereafter referred to as A. C. Co.) and the North American Commercial Company (N. A. C. Co.). There is a small straggling apology for a town round both stations, one of which is at Unalashka and the other at Dutch Harbour, another island of the group. They are the head-quarters for that part of the world of the American seal and whale fisheries. One of the Companies also "run" the "Seal Islands"<sup>1</sup> which lie farther north.

Everywhere are to be seen traces of the business formerly carried on by the Russians, both in such names as Pribylov, and more notably in the exquisite architecture of the Greek Church and Crosses on Unalashka. The entire population of the two stations is only about 400. We went

<sup>1</sup> The Pribylov Islands is the real name of this group. They lie on meridians 168° and 169° and about parallel 57°. Their name is a survival of the original Russian occupation.  
—H. W. T.

ashore and climbed most of the hills, returning on board with a few mementoes of our visit. The American revenue people kept sentries on the jetty during the whole of our stay; presumably because we carried arms, though, as a matter of fact they were all packed securely away in the hold.

We sailed on the 19th at noon, and all went merrily during that day and the next. The weather was gloriously fine, and our passengers were beginning to recover some of their lost "form." So far our journey had been unmarked by anything more serious than such trivial incidents as I have already narrated. Henceforward it began to get more exciting, and from this time right away up to July 2, when we sighted Alaskan land, we were in more or less imminent and constant peril.

We sighted ice on June 19!

Those who have merely crossed the Atlantic from Liverpool to Quebec and seen occasional icebergs floating majestically in the distance, will not be able to appreciate the full significance of the last sentence; but any one who has been in the Behring Sea, or has read of the experiences of Arctic explorers among the ice, will realize all that this meant to us. We saw no bergs: our anxiety had not even the solace of grandeur. But instead we were threatened and soon surrounded by "floe ice," which we had to dodge and escape as best we could to avoid being crushed by it.

As soon as we sighted it on June 19 we had immediately to alter our course and drift south. This was the first occasion on which I had seen it light all night. It was impossible to realize that it was midnight, and had it not been for the fact that my camera was stowed away with the rest of the baggage in the hold, I should have made some exposures in the course of "the night"

On the 20th we could scarcely move at all: the ice, which was thicker than ever, threatened to close around us, and we continued to drift slowly southwards.

On the 21st we were still drifting aimlessly, only just able to perceive that we were moving. There was no sign of open water, as far as the eye could reach. We caught sight of a few hair-seals and one fur-seal.

On the next day the sun put in an appearance for the first time for some days. We came out of the ice into open water, but ice still lay all around us, and we were forced to lay-to in the hopes that it would drift off and leave us a clear course. Up to now no observations had been possible, and we therefore had no idea where we were. Thus we remained all night and until 4 p.m. the next day (23rd), when we sailed for St. Matthew's Island.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew's Island lies in the Behring Sea on parallel 62° and meridian 173°, about half way between Alaska and Asia.—H. W. T.

The weather was warm but foggy, and we were unable to catch any fish. After steaming hard all night we passed St. Matthew's Island early on the morning of the 24th—Midsummer's Day!—and headed for St. Lawrence.<sup>1</sup> We could see a large field of ice ahead of us, and about 11 a.m. had to alter our course to W. by N. We sighted St. Lawrence at 11 p.m.—when, by the way, the sun was just setting. We were actually at this time exactly opposite to and only 230 miles from Norton Sound<sup>2</sup> and St. Michaels, whither we were bound, and yet it was not until nine days afterwards that we were able to anchor there.

On the 25th the ice came relentlessly down upon us once more, and we were reluctantly forced to give up all thought of reaching Norton Sound at that time. We turned back, and at last after a good deal of difficulty anchored in a safe roadstead off St. Lawrence. It was a gloriously fine, clear, sunny day and we were able to catch some more fish! After a most enjoyable meal—the result of our angling—we manned the boat, and a party of us went ashore on a small group of islands—the Penuncks.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St. Lawrence is a large island at the mouth of the Behring Strait, on meridian 170°. It is rather nearer to Asia than Alaska.

<sup>2</sup> Norton Sound, in Alaska, is the mouth of the Yukon river, for which the s.s. *Excelsior* was bound.

<sup>3</sup> These islets are not marked on the map, but are not far from St. Lawrence.—H. W. T.

Here we had quite a unique experience, and one which went a long way towards compensating those of us who were of an imaginative turn of mind for the enforced delay in our progress. It was so curious, so realistically gruesome, that I am tempted to relate it *in extenso*.

We had no sooner landed than we saw a large number of huts, approached by curious drain-like passages which had for the most part fallen in. These passages were zigzag in shape and extended for some distance beyond the entrance. The huts were built like mounds, two-storied, and below the level of the ground, thus clearly showing that they had been once inhabited by Esquimaux.

Not a living soul was to be seen. We approached the huts with considerable curiosity, and made our way into many of them. To do this we were mostly obliged to knock the roof off, as we had not time to clear out the *débris* from the passages. Every one bore manifest traces of having been inhabited. There were even lamps, partly filled with blubber. But in every one which we entered there were one or two skeletons of human beings, lying on the ground, some of them in hideously distorted attitudes, showing that death had been accompanied by great agony. It was a veritable city of the dead. The huts also contained large quantities of what we should call *objets d'art*, all made of ivory, whalebone, or wood,—drift or



wreckage. There were also raw hides, buckets made of walrus-hide, and ivory fish-hooks, some of them still bearing frozen bait. The ivory, taken from walrus tusks, was for the most part petrified, and by no means perfect. We returned to the ship with a whole boat-load of knick-knacks and the skull of the only white man that we found amongst the skeletons. All the rest were undoubtedly Esquimaux. One hut especially attracted attention. In it there were two perfect skeletons of dogs with the jaws locked tightly together. They had evidently died in the midst of one long protracted struggle to devour each other. The skeletons were complete, but fell to pieces when I tried to bring them away.

Another party went ashore next day, but had not time to thoroughly examine the whole island. They too returned with their boat laden down with ivory implements of every kind, good enough for curios, but not sufficiently perfect to have satisfied traders in those commodities.

On making inquiries at St. Lawrence I got a clue to the tragedy. About three years previously, I learned, these islands had been inhabited by Esquimaux who depended entirely on hunting the whale and the walrus during the summer-time. In the winter they ate the flesh and fashioned these curious implements out of the skeletons and ivory, lighting their underground huts with the

blubber. American boats called in the spring, traded with them for such of their stock-in-trade as were sufficiently perfect to find a market, and left them to replenish it during the summer and winter. One spring a schooner had arrived with a cargo of whisky which it exchanged for the ivory. There history ends. Imagination must supply the rest.

Evidently these poor wretches had spent the summer in one long protracted "drunk," the result of the spring's trading. Autumn overtook them before the whisky was finished. When they at last regained their senses, they found the hunting season passed, the sea frozen, and themselves without any food laid in for the winter, and with no chance of getting any. There was no timber on the island: they had collected no drift. What provisions they had must have run out before autumn had given place to winter, and they must have found themselves reduced to the awful situation of having to lay down and wait for Death, without food, without fire, without light. It is a horrible thought that it was perhaps the one white man whose skull we found who had initiated them into the deadly cult of spirits, which caused their extermination.

On the 26th the ice started to come down upon us once more, and we were forced to get under way to escape it. We went under shelter of the

main island and anchored again. There we found more huts, and saw signs of a settlement which we took to be a Presbyterian Mission, but did not visit it. We had by this time run out of fodder for our live stock (sheep, etc.), and a party accordingly went on shore to pick grass for them. We had literally to do this with our hands and bring it on board in sacks.

We lay off St. Lawrence all that day and the next in a thick fog, but our old enemy was persistent in giving us no peace, and we had to get under way at 6.30 p.m. to escape the ice which was again closing in upon us. It was one long ceaseless struggle to avoid being crushed. The majority of us were up all night on several occasions keeping watch, for we never knew, especially in the fog, from what side we might next be threatened. We tried nearly every point of the compass, and were always met by an impenetrable barrier of ice.

"The ice was here, the ice was there,  
The ice was all around :  
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,  
Like noises in a swound"

—only our ice was not "mast high," it was merely a more or less level expanse of floating prison-walls.

We were rolling badly all night with a heavy swell in such open water as was vouchsafed us.

Next day we tried to get to the village on St. Lawrence, but were unable to do so. The fog was again dense. We were now threatened with a fresh danger. Owing to the unforeseen protraction of our journey we ran out of fresh water, and had only enough coals left to keep a supply in reserve in case of an extremity of danger. What was to be done? Here were we, ice-locked, fog-bound, and hovering about opposite to our destination with a vast moving ice-floe between us and it. Things were getting most serious, and yet this was the middle of summer with the nights literally "as clear as the day"

At last, on June 30, we steamed, with what coal we could spare, into four and three-quarter fathoms, one mile from the shore. We were as nearly as possible crushed in ice several times, and even poor M——'s sickness could not rouse us to a joke. Luckily there was any amount of driftwood visible, and a party of us made the best of our way ashore and brought back a large quantity of it, to take the place of coal in the furnaces. Not knowing whether this might not be the beginning of the end, we picked out the largest log we could find, flattened one side with an axe, and cut out on this impromptu tablet the following inscription and left it standing about sixteen feet clear of the ground in which we firmly embedded one end of it:

N.-W. M. POLICE—CANADA

N.-W. T.—30 JUNE '95.

S.S. EXCELSIOR.<sup>1</sup>

We managed to procure a little fresh water, and having rafted the wood, towed it off to the ship.

On July 1 we rejoiced to see clear water around us, and began to hope the ice had cleared off—suddenly, as is its wont. We got up anchor at 11 a.m., but our hopes were destined to disappointment, for the ice presently came down on us again. We anchored for the night in sight of land—Alaska this time, we had sighted Siberia previously—in sixteen fathoms with ice all around us.

On the next day (2nd) after an anxious night's watching, we got under way again at 10 a.m. Things were getting desperate, but we managed somehow to steer a course through the loose ice, and were rewarded by getting into more open water in the afternoon. After passing Sledge Island,<sup>2</sup> we sighted Rodney Point,<sup>3</sup> having thus

<sup>1</sup> That is, of course, North-West Mounted Police, North-West Territories. Steamship *Excelsior*.

<sup>2</sup> Sledge Island lies in the Behring Strait, some fifty miles due west of the peninsula, in which the American continent approaches nearest to Asia.

<sup>3</sup> Rodney Point is at the extremity of the northern arm of Norton Sound (see note on p. 17).—H. W. T.

been carried some distance to the N.W. of our destination. We steamed within five miles of Sledge Island, and were finally clear of the ice off Cape Nome.<sup>1</sup>

Here we saw an Indian village, and were met by a yuniak or family canoe, made of walrus-hide, containing seven men and three women—all Indians, all dressed alike in salmon-skin, and all horribly dirty. No one on board was able to make himself understood by them, and they pushed off in great excitement when the whistle blew.

At last, to everybody's relief, and, I fancy, contrary to the expectations of a few, we cast anchor off St. Michaels at 10 a.m. on the morning of the 3rd. The harbour is too shallow for even such ocean-going steamers as ours to go alongside the jetty, and so a river-steamer—the *P. B. Weare*—came alongside, and we began transferring our cargo on to her.

The little town of St. Michaels—formerly known by its Russian name of Michaelovski—is the headquarters for the Yukon of the A. C. Co. and the N. A. T. Co. It consists entirely of the Companies' officers and clerks; two or three white women, wives of the officers; and some few Indians and hunters. The whole population is not more

<sup>1</sup> Cape Nome is one of the promontories that run out into Norton Sound. It is between parallels 56° and 57°, and about meridian 166°.—H. W. T.

than three hundred. The Indians are small, and of low, thick-set stature. They are all horribly dirty, and smell most offensively of fish, the result of eating large quantities of seal-oil, which also gives them a repulsively fat and greasy appearance. The half-breed women wear skirts, but the klutch (short for klutchman, the local name for squaws) dress exactly like the men, and have not the smallest pretence to looks or figure. They are like a sack—"tied up ugly." On the whole, however, they are good-natured people, quiet and inoffensive. The town is exposed to all weathers, and the inhabitants have to depend entirely for fuel upon drift-wood, of which large quantities are borne down by the river.

The day after our arrival was "the glorious 4th of July," and was celebrated by Indian canoe-races, in which seventeen Indians rowed in one boat, every man pulling an irresponsible, independent stroke of his own. Later in the day there were fireworks, but their effect was somewhat spoilt by the fact that there was no darkness during the night in which to exhibit them. A pyrotechnical display by broad daylight at 11 p.m. was a novel experience.

Finally, on July 5, the passengers followed the cargo on board the *P. B. Weare*, and started for the 1800 miles trip up the Yukon.

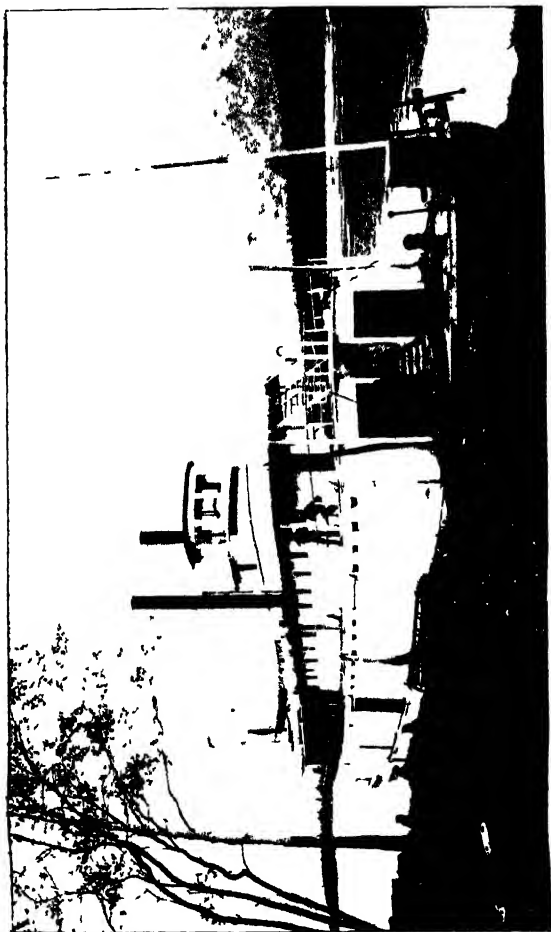
## CHAPTER II

### UP THE YUKON TO FORTY MILE

THE boat on which we were to make these 1800 miles was a large river-steamer, typical of the kind in use on the Yukon, flat-bottomed and driven by a stern-wheel. It was not at all unlike a Thames houseboat, only it had two smoke-stacks and was three-storied. That is to say, the bows and stern were flat, and on a level with the bank when moored. The whole space between was roofed and boarded in, and some steps led to the middle deck or story, on which there was another long erection containing cabins and berths, which left space, however, for a railed gangway all round. Above this again was another flat roof forming the upper deck, also railed round, and with a deck-house at one end for the wheel and compass. The whole was painted white, and bore the name of the owner, *Portus B. Weare*.

This somewhat novel steamer burned wood entirely, and this had to be collected at frequent





THE RIVER STEAMER—"PONTUS P. WEARE" (captain of the *kuilim* *sewa* *il* *us* *n* *tu* *l* *us* *m*) *Paz* 76



intervals during the journey, involving constant stoppages, during which passengers and crew alike went on shore armed with axes and other offensive weapons of a similar nature, and set to work chopping wood to take them a few miles further up the river, when the same process had to be gone through again! Some idea of the amount of work which this necessitated may be gathered from the fact that to make any speed against the current of the river, which is very swift, we had to burn from a cord<sup>1</sup> and a half to two cords of wood per hour. There is a plentiful supply of small timber along the banks the whole way (mostly spruce), but after the first novelty of such "coaling" had worn off, the constant stoppages, even if one did not oneself go on shore and chop wood every time, became a great nuisance.

We got under way about 2 p.m. (July 5). After leaving St. Michaels there are about eighty miles of sea passage before getting into the mouth of the Yukon, and this trip can only be made in fine weather owing to the peculiar build of the river-steamers. We had not gone very far before it came on to blow, and we only just managed to get back into St. Michaels and anchor. Our old friend the *Excelsior* had just put out to sea. The wind sank again towards evening, and we set out

<sup>1</sup> A "cord" of wood is a stack measuring 4 by 4 by 8 feet.  
—H. W. T.

once more and headed for the mouth of the river, intending to go in with the tide. But the Fates were still against us. Our wood supply gave out before we reached the mouth, and we had to make the first of our many expeditions on shore to replenish it. By the time this was done we were glad to turn in, and all I can say is, that we at last got into the river some time in the course of the night.

When we woke we were again at a standstill. This time we were tied up to the bank while the stokers were busy getting the salt-water out of the boiler-tubes. This lasted some time, and it was not until 4 p.m. that we finally started on our river journey proper.

During this time I was beginning to struggle against the first of the many difficulties under which the photographs which illustrate this narrative were taken. Before leaving I had ordered a complete set of photographic apparatus—half-plate—to be sent on from Montreal, and these had got packed away with the rest of our baggage in the hold of the *Excelsior*. I had managed to extricate it during the transference of the baggage to the *P. B. Weare*, and had started filling my dark slides. Under ordinary circumstances I might have done this in my bunk at night, but here there was no night in the photographer's sense of the word. Clearly then some other method must be devised, and this, as it turned out, was no easy task. I had

made a first attempt in the cabin of the *Excelsior*, temporarily blocking up the windows with blankets, etc. Things were going on grandly. I had a box of plates open and was just putting the first lot into the dark slides, when the purser—a “face-tious” fellow—kicked the door in! The plates were all spoiled, and then it was my turn to kick.

The nearest approach to a dark room on board the *P. B. Weare* was down in the hold. Hither then I made my way and stood, wrapped up in a blanket, knee-deep in bilge water. But the game was not “worth the candle,” for in addition to the unsavoury nature of the place, only four plates out of the dozen came up free from “fog.” The others were hopelessly spoiled. After that I once more turned my thoughts cabinwards, and rigged up an apology for a dark room with blankets and oilskins, but even this was not absolutely light-tight, and most of the views taken during the river trip show signs of “leakage.” I developed entirely with the Eikonogen formula given with Edwards’ plates, which were one of the two or three varieties I took with me. I shall have more to say on the subject of photography later on.

We made very fair speed on the 7th, stopping every now and then to take on more wood and passing Indian villages along the banks at intervals. We were now well in the river, and the country on both sides of us and as far as the eye could see

was very flat, save for a slight rise here and there just on the banks, which were covered with a plentiful crop of king-grass. We were all of us beginning to "get sick" of things in general. Excitement had run high when the news first became known that a party was to be sent up, and almost every one had volunteered at head-quarters. From this eager multitude our party of twenty had been carefully chosen. Our start had been something of a triumphal progress, and we were all in the best of spirits and in love with the novelty of the whole business. There is always a certain charm in the prospect of pioneering, and in the knowledge that one is about to embark on an undertaking that has not been entered upon before. We had been kept fully occupied at Seattle; our start from there had been full of incident. We were thrown amongst a new set of men: there were acquaintances to be made, stories to be told, and the tedium of the voyage had been enlivened by many such humorous incidents as I have already related. Then, too, our voyage across the Pacific had been anything but dull from the time we left Dutch Harbour. The constant uncertainty about the movements of the ice and our discovery of the Esquimaux remains had kept our thoughts fully occupied.

But here it was different. We were steaming, stopping, stopping, steaming, against a swift current,

between banks whose utter bleak monotony was only varied by an occasional Indian village, all of one uninteresting type of squalor. We all knew each other—too well perhaps. All the yarns had been spun, and our thoughts, being for the first time unoccupied, naturally reverted to what was before us. The first excitement had worn off, “the gilt was off the gingerbread,” and the “gingerbread” did not look altogether toothsome. I admit that the prospect was far worse than the reality, for when once we had reached our destination, constant hard work kept our thoughts fully occupied, though even so, I expect some of us on looking back at the end of the first winter must have wondered what had made them so eager to volunteer. But in the deadly monotony of our surroundings on that first day on the river, with idle hands and the eternal daylight, it was impossible not to feel low-spirited. Only those who have made that trip can realize the hideous sameness of steaming up through barren, unlovely country with nothing whatever to do, and the speed decreasing every day as the current grew stronger. The *ennui* was absolutely indescribable. And at the end of it—what? To be landed for two years in a miners’ camp, with no accommodation prepared for us, none of the daily pleasures and varieties to which we had been accustomed, and no certainty of any fresh meat during the

whole of the time : not knowing how our presence there would be regarded, nor even how far our jurisdiction extended. Verily for as bad an attack of "the blues" as one can ever wish to have, commend me to a first journey up the Yukon in the days previous to the rush !

On the 8th the country became a little more hilly, and for a time the monotony was broken. There were still Indian villages on the banks at more or less regular intervals, and during the afternoon we cast anchor opposite a Greek missionary settlement. This is merely a collection of a few huts in a rather picturesque little cove, but it was a welcome change from the eternal Indian. They were building there at that time, and the sloping beach was covered with logs and a goodly collection of canoes, which the Indians manage with great skill. Timber is very plentiful all round, and the position is as sheltered a one as could be found anywhere on the lower river. Like most missionaries in this district, the priests combine trading with their evangelistic work. It would be hard to say which is the most successful !

Taking a general average our speed up the river at this time was about eighty miles a day under favourable circumstances. We only stopped at the Mission long enough to replenish our wood supply, and then got under way once more and went on without further incident.



**THE PIONEERS OF THE ALASKA**  
**Being an account of two years Police**  
**service on the Yukon.**

**Narrated by**

**M.H.E. HAYNE,**

**S.C.O. OF THE N.W. MOUNTED POLICE,**  
**and recorded by**

**H. WEST TAYLOR.**

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**21.7.35.**



On the 9th we made one of our many stoppages at an Indian village, and some of our party went ashore. By way of variety, one man thought he would try his hand at navigating a small birch-bark canoe, such as the Indians use, confident that he would give us a display of his skill. He did. He had no sooner got into it than it got caught in a fish-trap, and he got out again on the other—the water—side. He had to swim ashore under a running fire of chaff from the delighted passengers, and thought himself lucky to have got off with nothing worse than a ducking. I believe he was regarded as a public benefactor for having caused a slight diversion from the unbroken monotony of our existence.

We had to amuse ourselves as best we could, and it was not long before a fresh element of discomfort was added to those which already existed in abundance. This took the form of mosquitoes. Although we were every hour getting nearer and nearer to the Arctic Circle, the heat was unbearable, and the mosquitoes—a fine, healthy, full-grown variety of the species—were almost as thick as the Egyptians' plague of flies. They hovered over us like a cloud, and from the meals they made off us we were forced to the conclusion that we afforded them some sort of unknown and highly appreciated delicacy. It was useless to go on shore for relaxation. The flies drove us back

on board again, and as though repenting of having banished and routed us, they followed us there, until we felt almost inclined to jump overboard to escape them. The natural heat, too, was increased tenfold on board by the heat from the boilers, which was absolutely insupportable. One could hear the logs crackling and roaring with an energy worthy of a better cause, and which recalled mocking memories of Christmas and Yule logs at home. Anything soluble on board promptly melted and ran. My valise was in a disgusting state. Some things in it had succumbed to the heat, and oozed gently over its other contents. I even lost a packet of plates from the gelatine in the films dissolving.

Soon after the canoe incident another diversion was afforded by some men who were fooling about on deck. Banter and chaff had developed into a sort of general scrimmage, and things were getting quite lively when suddenly a tremendous splash was heard. At first we thought that a man had slipped and fallen overboard. There could not have been more excitement if it had been so, indeed I doubt if there would have been as much, for we discovered almost immediately that the "man overboard" was nothing more or less than the C.O.'s washing machine—not for his private ablutions, but a sort of portable laundry which formed a very important item of our equipment.

It had been standing on the deck, and had got pushed over in the scuffle. It took us a good hour to recover it, but I don't know what we should have done had we lost it.

On the 10th we stopped for an hour or so at the Roman Catholic Mission Settlement, which is situated on the right-hand bank, about 500 miles from the mouth of the river. It is merely a collection of three or four wooden huts standing on the top of the somewhat shelving bank, and surrounded by a few shrubs and small trees. The situation is not nearly so picturesque as that of the Greek Mission lower down, but the people were very kind and civil, and provided us with one or two luxuries in the way of cabbages, and other vegetables which they had growing there in the small plot of ground which they had managed to cultivate. It was the first idea we had that such things could be grown there, and the discovery came as a surprise to most of us. There were two or three good-sized rowing-boats, with oars and row-locks, lying on the beach, and altogether it was quite an oasis of civilization in the desert barrenness of the surrounding country.

But we had not come out on a missionary enterprise, and after a short pause our flat-bottomed, wood-burning, stew-pan of a steamer started forth once more on her way. Speed got slower and slower every day, for the current seemed to come

rolling down with ever-increasing force. Ten days' dreary steaming, unrelieved by any incident worth mention, followed our halt at the Mission, and it seemed as though we had finally and irrevocably passed the barrier of civilization. Even the Indian villages, mere collections of squalid mud-huts, as dirty as their puny owners, were few and far between, and there was nothing for it but to lie about and smoke—luckily we were plentifully supplied with tobacco—and inveigh against things in general, and the engineers, poor creatures! in particular. The barren wilderness of low-lying ground on either side had given place to equally interminable hills which hemmed us into a sort of Cañon as far as the eye could see. These are known as "The Ramparts," and the current here was very swift, and navigation was at times rather dangerous.

We emerged from the shadow of these hills at last, and came out into the Yukon Flats—which are like our "Broads" on a gigantic scale. The river spreads out for miles and miles—about ten actually—on either side over a vast extent of flat country, dotted by innumerable islets. There is a bar at the entrance to these Flats which caused us some trouble. We were delayed by contrary winds, which have here abundant room to gather force, and for a long time could not get over the bar. Finally the whole body of passengers and

crew had to disembark to enable the steamer to cross it. The banks on both sides at this point are well within the Arctic Circle, and even away from the boilers the heat was overpowering. The sun was visible all night on many occasions, and generally high in the heavens even at midnight. The farther north we went, the worse the mosquitoes seemed to get, until, like the rats in Browning's *Pied Piper*, they threatened literally to swamp us.

We were now nearing the most northerly point of our journey—the bend of the river. Just at this point are the remains of an old settlement, now abandoned, named Fort Yukon. This City of the Dead was simply black with mosquitoes. It would have been impossible to live there at that time. The place had once been the head-quarters of the Hudson Bay Trading Company in Alaska.

After passing this nest of mosquitoes, we were at last within appreciable distance of the end of our journey, and every one was profoundly thankful that it was so. We had still some way to go, it is true, but the worst of it was now over. We were within a comparatively short distance of Circle City, the first of the mining centres, and at that time, or soon afterwards, the most important. We arrived there on the morning of July 20, and found that building operations had just started. The photograph I took of it shows men engaged in the erection of the wooden "shacks" and other buildings

peculiar to the country, and of whose construction I shall have more to say in a subsequent chapter when I come to describe the crection of our own Post. Female society was not wanting even at this early stage in its history, and my photograph shows one lady gracefully posing in the centre, whilst close by another sits nursing a child. The ground is partly occupied by tents, but already the beginning of a considerable town—as towns go up there—are to be seen extending for some distance. Unfortunately the exposure went wrong, and there is a broad, luminous band right across the picture.

The diggings here were beginning to be looked upon as the richest on the Yukon. Indeed it was not until all the best claims had been staked out and mining was in full swing on the Klondyke, that the Americans of Circle City—for once caught napping—awoke to the fact that the North-West Territories had gone one better than Alaska, and promptly deserted what they had up to then regarded as the best paying ground on the river. Circle City is now almost as abandoned as Fort Yukon. The name has now been crossed out, and that of "Silent City" substituted.

But I am anticipating the course of events. At the time of our arrival every one in the neighbourhood was rushing to Circle City. As I have said, building operations were going on "fast and



heavy," and they continued to build there until the place became the largest log city in the world.

Shortly after passing Circle we sighted two moose—a big animal of the deer family, and splendid eating. The peculiar properties of an echo were now strikingly demonstrated. By blowing the steamer's whistle, a loud echo was formed behind the animals. Hearing this they at once started running away from the quarter in which they heard the sound—i. e. the echo—and towards the stream from which the sound had actually come. This brought them well within range. The miners and the Indian crew all carried Winchester repeaters, and these were speedily brought into use. But, alas for our marksmanship, the excitement was so great that 500 rounds of ammunition were expended in about a minute and a half, and only one moose was hit. This beast came floating down the river, whilst the other made his way off, having by this time discovered in a practical manner from what direction the noise really proceeded. He was speedily out of range, and the disappointed marksmen wreaked their revenge upon the floating body of his less fortunate comrade. The result was that the wretched animal had so much lead plugged into him that he sank before we could get the boat out to pick him up. And so our hastily-formed dreams of venison pie were ignominiously ended.

The force of the current was still steadily increasing. When the steamer stopped, if the Hibernicism may pass, her engines had to be kept going at quarter-power all the time to keep her level. One day when we were supposed to be going full-steam ahead, I was surprised and amused to notice, by the bank, that we were actually going backwards down-stream. The captain came up at the moment and asked me the reason of my hilarity. Upon my pointing to the bank and bidding him mark the direction in which it appeared to be travelling, his sorely-tried temper gave way. His remarks were of a nature to make a negro blush, and he sent for the helpless engineer and asked him to be good enough to explain matters. The result was that the man was dismissed on the spot, and a spare engineer, who happened to be on board, put in his place. It took a full head of steam to make any headway against the current at this time.

On the 22nd we sighted another moose at 5 a.m. Instantly there was a shout of "Moose, moose!" taken up by every one on board. The fusillade was repeated, but this time with greater judgment and a larger measure of success. We succeeded in hoisting him up on the davits; and once on deck it was a short journey into the cook's pan, from whence he went the way of all venison, much to every one's delight and satisfaction. From that

time we regularly "bagged" one or two per day, and only lost one other.

But for this diversion and in spite of the fact that we were nearing our destination, existence would have been almost unbearable. The accommodation was shocking. we were continually stopping to take on wood, of which we were burning more than ever now; and the long line of banks on either hand was unbroken by any relieving feature of any kind. One was inclined to while away the time by brooding over such abstruse problems as what would happen when the traffic up the river increased, and the whole available supply of wood had been cut down along the banks. Foolish speculation, for quicker modes of access will have been devised long before such a thing could happen: if not flying-machines, at least a railroad. Still it serves to show to what a pitch of depression we had got that such speculations were entertained.

At last, on July 24, the seemingly interminable 1800 miles were accomplished, and we arrived at Fort Cudahy. Our travels at that time were ended. At last we should have some active regular employment after the enforced idleness or spasmodic wood-cutting of the last nineteen days. What a relief that was to all on board may be judged from what has been already said of the tedium of the voyage.

## CHAPTER III

### FIRST DAYS AFTER OUR ARRIVAL

AFTER such a long spell of monotonous idleness, I believe even such hard labour as oakum-picking would have been welcomed by our men. We had not that to do, it is true, but the work that was before us after we landed at Cudahy, and which had to be accomplished in a very short space of time, if it was to be got through before winter set in, was of an equally arduous, if less confined, nature.

Cudahy—or Fort Cudahy, to give it its full name—stands just below the junction of Forty Mile River with the Yukon, and facing the town of Forty Mile which occupies the narrow spit of land forming the angle between the two rivers. It was originally nothing more than an outlying trading post belonging to the N. A. T. T. Co., and consisting chiefly of a few small stores and a saw-mill, which we found exceedingly useful at a later date. The town of Forty Mile on the other

side of the river of the same name is a mere straggling collection of log store-houses and shacks, "run" by the A. C. Co., for the whole district was until quite recently believed to be in Alaska—*i. e.* in American territory. Its chief importance, however, at this time was due not so much to the presence of the A. C. Co.'s Stores as to the fact that it was the mining camp and head-quarters for those working on the river and its tributaries. The Yukon, at this point 1800 miles from its mouth, is about 650 yards wide and twenty fathoms deep. Until the subsequent discovery of the gold on the tributaries of the Klondyke, fifty miles further up the Yukon, the Forty Mile district contained some of the richest ground in the N.-W. Territories, with the result that the trading post at the mouth rapidly swelled into a log-town of considerable importance. It is a noticeable fact that when strikes are made on any creeks, the head-quarters for the district are invariably established at the point where the river into which these creeks flow joins the Yukon.

A few words as to the much-discussed boundary question will not be out of place here. At the time of our arrival it was still *sub judice*. Indeed the first report sent home by our C. O., Inspector Constantine, says: "The lower ends of these two creeks (*i. e.* Glacier and Miller—tributaries of Sixty Mile river (see sketch-map), which is some

miles beyond the Klondyke) are supposed to be in the North-West Territories." The report was dated January 20, 1896. Writing again in August of the same year, he says: "The running of the boundary-line last winter determined the fact that gold-bearing creeks which hitherto were supposed to be in American territory, are wholly, or in part, in Canada; the two principal ones being Miller and Glacier."

As a matter of fact the boundary-line runs along meridian  $141^{\circ}$ , and we left Alaska and entered Canadian territory soon after passing Circle City. The line runs straight from Demarcation Point on the Arctic Ocean to Mount St. Elias. Of this there is now no doubt whatever. The result is that the whole of the mining district of Forty Mile, Sixty Mile, and the Klondyke river, are in Canadian territory, and therefore all mining dues from these rich districts go to the Canadian Treasury. Fort Cudahy is actually about twenty-five miles on the "right side" of the boundary-line.

The stores at these two places—Cudahy and Forty Mile—are for the most part empty, for all provisions, etc., brought in by the Companies are always bespoke long before they arrive. Certain commodities, such as tobacco, may repose there for a short time after their arrival, but not for long. We ourselves took up a year's supply—Canadian

myrtle-plug is the brand most in vogue—and when this was exhausted we were supplied by the Companies who contracted with the Government to let us have it at very reasonable rates. They also supply the miners. There is probably as much used for chewing as for pipe-smoking, and the tobacco-chewer may almost be called one of the drawbacks of the country. It is impossible to keep anything clean. Nothing is sacred to him. A newly-cleaned stove is his particular mark, and he is as “proficient” as the famous American in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. If a miner happens to have a clean stove about the place, and a man drops in with his cud in his mouth, the first thing he invariably does is to spit on the stove. It is a sort of recognized salutation—an informal way of starting conversation!

On our arrival on July 24, we at once started getting things ashore from the *P. B. Weare*, and we speedily realized, in a manner we had never done before, the true value of the noble horse which we had left behind us. Under ordinary circumstances we ride practically everywhere: the smallest distance is covered on horseback. Here we were dependent entirely on “man-power.” Not only had we to walk—a mere detail—but we had to carry and drag everything, no matter how heavy, with our own hands. This may seem a trivial matter to dwell on, but when it comes to

moving whole tree-trunks, it becomes a very serious matter for a small body of men.

As I have already said, there was absolutely no provision made for us, and no quarters to march into. Not only had we to erect everything for ourselves, but we had to do it without a day's delay, so that it might be ready by the time the winter set in and the river froze up—an event less than three months distant. During these few weeks the ground had to be cleared, the logs found, cut and sawed, and sufficient accommodation erected to house twenty men during a severe winter, and—though this sounds like a paradox—there were only twenty men to do it. We succeeded in renting some “shacks” (miners’ huts) from the Company in which to take up our abode in the meantime, and then set to work in deadly earnest.

The confusion at first was horrible. Everything had to be landed and stored away somewhere, and provision had also to be made for half of us to start at once on a further journey up the river to get logs for building, whilst the other half stayed at Cudahy, to put in drains, level the ground, and generally form a site for the commencement of building operations as soon as the materials should be ready. When I first saw this site, I thought it would be utterly impossible ever to get any dry ground for the erection of the Post. It was at this time a swamp with small spruce, not large enough



for building-logs, growing all over it, and covered with eighteen inches of thick saturated moss. It was close to Cudahy, between it and the point where Forty Mile river joins the Yukon, and facing the town of Forty Mile, which was at this time still only a small accumulation of shacks, with a saloon thrown in to keep things lively. There was no fixed population, although the numbers were generally about the same—roughly 300. Miners were continually coming in, stopping there for a day or two, and then passing out again, their places being constantly taken by fresh arrivals who would pursue an exactly similar course.

Early in the morning of the 26th a party, of whom I was one, started up the river in a steamer specially chartered for us in search of logs. There was no big timber on the banks just there, though if we had had horses we might have found some a little further inland or down stream; not having these, however, we were forced to go up stream until we found what we wanted growing right down on the bank, whence it could be got into the river and floated down to the site we had selected. For this purpose it was necessary to go a considerable distance, for there is no settlement for miles above Forty Mile, and the logs are continually being thinned out as building is extended. Naturally the first-comer takes those nearest to him: the next has to go up

higher, until a late arrival is likely to find nothing but the stumps of large trees for some miles above the settlement. So it was with us, while, as if to increase our aggravation, we knew we could have obtained any quantity of admirable timber half-a-mile below Cudahy, but as Nature has ordained that wood shall not float up stream when left to itself, and as we had no means of transportation, there was nothing for it but to go up higher than the spot the last man had cleared. It was a first-rate illustration of the old story of Mahomet and the mountain.

At three o'clock in the afternoon we reached Twin Islands at the mouth of Twelve Mile Creek, where we landed and camped on the sand. The banks everywhere are of the same pattern: a low scrub close down on to the beach—regular bush country on a small scale—with bigger trees beyond, and always the sodden, spongy moss, which made camping anywhere except on the sand an impossibility. It was too late to get to work that day, so after pitching our camp we turned in early so as to be ready for an early start and a hard day's work on the morrow. The nights were now beginning to grow dusk for about two hours after midnight.

I had a little fox-terrier with me, who had gone up with us, and I was surprised to notice that he was strangely nervous all through that night.



VIEW ON COLD CREEK.—Page 45



Nothing would quiet him. He was trembling all over, and would keep going to the door of the tent, peer out, sniff about, and then creep back to me with his tail between his legs, thoroughly cowed, and presenting a most ludicrous appearance of sheer funk. Next morning I discovered the reason. A big brown bear had been sleeping in the bush about two yards behind my tent. Bears are very plentiful in this part of the country, though this was the first we had seen. He was making off towards the river when I first caught sight of him. My Winchester was strapped up in its case, and though I got it out as quickly as I could, Bruin was well down the river and swimming hard before I was ready to deal with him. I at once put out in a boat, but he had a good start and the current was flowing very swiftly. He reached the opposite bank before I was well under way, and then stood upon his hind legs to have a look at me. He was a splendid beast, and I could not refuse his invitation, though it was a long shot and I was being carried rapidly down stream. My bullet hit him, but not in a vital spot, and with a growl of pain he dropped on to his front paws and started off in that long, low, clumsy, swinging trot with which bears seem to roll over the ground. With some difficulty I managed to land on the opposite bank and started off in pursuit, but what with the start and the thickness of the bush and the spongy nature of

the ground I could not get near enough to risk another shot, and after half-an-hour, remembering that I had come to fell trees and not to stalk bears, I regretfully abandoned the pursuit. These are the kind of incidental events which go towards making up one's daily life in these out-of-the-way places.

When I returned I found the others had finished breakfast and set to work in earnest. None of us had done any work for so long that we all set to it with a will. There was an abundance of fine big timber on the island, but the getting of it was no easy matter. During that day we knocked down 150 logs, but we had to leave quite half of them where they fell as our united strength was not sufficient to drag them through the bush and moss to the water's-edge.

Each one had to be "rossed" (stripped of its bark) on one side to allow it to slide over the extempore rollers which we laid down wherever the ground was sufficiently solid to bear them, and in addition to this a road had to be swamped out for every one. When this was done, we put down skids and heeled the log up with ropes. But even so we found many of them too heavy to drag over the distance from the place where we had felled them to the water.

We worked on that island all the 28th, during which we just managed to get out twenty-three

logs, as the result of six hours as hard work as we were capable of. When we had got them out of the clearing, they still had to be carried some distance to the beach. Next day we only got out thirty-four in the whole day, and every one was absolutely "played out" at the end of it. The size of these logs varied from sixteen to thirty-five feet in length, and from seven to ten inches through at the smaller end. They were all green and as full of sap as they could hold, which, of course, made them all the heavier.

During that day we had our first hint of what bids fair to be the tragedy of mining on the Yukon, viz. scarcity of provisions. A solitary man who was making his way down to Forty Mile in a boat, put in on the island whilst we were at work, having seen our encampment on the beach. He had been up at Sixty Mile all the winter—it was now the end of July—and they had run out of food up there. I have seldom seen a more pitiable sight. We gave him as good a meal as we could muster, and his eyes looked as though they would start from his head at the sight of such a luxury as sugar. They had not tasted sugar or salt at Sixty Mile all the winter, and they were simply "existing"—how it is impossible to say—until a steamer should come up with provisions. Steamers at this time usually made one trip as far up the river as that during the season—i. e. *during the year*. He had

been sent down as a last despairing measure to see whether they had been forgotten. It is worthy of remark that he had passed the mouth of the Klondyke where the busy settlement of Dawson now stands, but where, as he passed it, there was no sign of human habitation. No one had the smallest idea of the existence of a fabulously rich gold-field—I use the word “fabulously” advisedly—within a few miles of the mouth.

On the following day we only got out twenty-four logs. We were going on very well all this time, and our men were as a rule in splendid condition. There was no actual illness of any kind. The only trouble we had was from another plague of flies. This time the nuisance appeared in the shape of a little, or rather of countless little, black fleas, which were known by the generic name of gnat, although they bear very little resemblance to either of those insects. These “gnats” have a most obnoxious habit of working half of their wretched little bodies under the skin, and as they are peculiarly vicious and poisonous, they ultimately proved a very serious source of annoyance. They get into one’s blankets and clothes, and once in it is practically impossible to dislodge them. They are impervious to smoke, and even “smudging” (smoking with fires of green wood) has no deterrent effect upon them. They have an especial affection for the ankles, wrists, neck, and under the eyes, which



they cause to swell in a most alarming fashion. Nothing can be done, unless it be to gain a few moments' relief by bathing the affected parts in salt-and-water. You must simply grin and bear it—and not scratch if you can help it. In spite of it all, however, the men were uniformly cheerful. I never saw men work as they did, and under the greatest difficulties throughout.

On the day following we began collecting as many of the logs as we had been able to get out, having finally decided to abandon the rest. Our idea was to make a raft and float it down to a place a little lower down stream where we had seen a supply of logs—not so big, it is true, but more conveniently situated for getting out. We worked all that\*day up to our waists in water, making a frame for the raft. The water was as cold as it could be, for it is probable that a certain quantity of the winter's ice never melts, and does not get carried down in the spring, but remains glued to the bottom all through the summer. When we came out of the water our whole flesh used to be wrinkled up like a washerwoman's hands, but for all that cheerfulness reigned supreme, and, strange to say, there were no colds and no rheumatism, although we would be in the water for five or six hours at a stretch both morning and afternoon. This may perhaps be accounted for by the fact that we were as hard at work as we could be the

whole time, and so kept the circulation going fast and furious, and that we always immediately changed into warm dry clothes on coming out.

That day we got the frame pinned together, boring holes in the logs with an augur, and fixing them with stout wooden pins. On the following day (August 1) our raft was completed and ready to move. It measured 40 × 20 feet, and consisted of one hundred and one good big logs in two transverse layers. Next day we laid all our camp on it and floated it down stream, taking care to have two boats handy, as there were all sorts of treacherous cross-currents. A raft is an exceptionally unwieldy craft to navigate even in still water, and we as nearly as possible lost it. Luckily we had a heavy three-inch hawser, which we got round a rock by holding one end of the rope and running round and round the rock until it was fixed. We were only just in time. No sooner was it fixed, than the hawser tightened—luckily it was new and very strong—and the raft swung in with the current right in to the mouth of Twelve-Mile Creek. We at once made a new camp on the bank, pitching our tents on the beach, and then got to work again at felling trees. There was a fine clump just at that point with fair-sized logs, nice and handy.

This time we worked on rather a different plan. We put in a system of dams into an old, dried-up creek which we found there, and thus

were enabled to float our logs down to the Yukon and collect them at the mouth of the creek. This saved an enormous amount of labour and strength. When the sluices dried up, we dammed them up again and so regulated our canalage to a nicety.

Take what precautions you may, you cannot always make sure of a tree falling in the exact direction you intended it to ; and this led to one or two very narrow shaves. I remember one occasion on which a fellow was standing directly in the line of a falling tree. The top branches, we could see, would reach well into the water after it had fallen, and the clearing was too narrow to allow him to step to one side. He saw his danger just in time, and did the only thing it was possible for him to do. He jumped hastily into the river at the very moment, it seemed to us, at which the tree came crashing down on to the very place on which, a moment before, he had been standing. The branches came down into the river with a splash that drenched us, though we were standing some yards away at the moment he sank. At first we feared he had been struck by them and stunned, for we could see no sign of him. After a few seconds' suspense his head appeared above water some way down stream. He did not seem the least bit concerned, for he merely blew the water out of his mouth and remarked, "By Jove, boys, that was a narrow shave !"

The weather now became very bad; rain fell in torrents, but the work had to be done, although the bush was as wet as it could be, and the moss more swampy than ever. To make matters worse we sometimes had to go into the mouth of the creek to catch our logs, and stand there in a current, swollen to still greater force by the rain, which would almost carry us off our legs. There was a big bar at the mouth of the creek which caused us a good deal of trouble. We had to catch the logs with pike-poles and steer them just on to the beach so that they might be ready to hand when we had enough of them to start building another raft.

Occasionally a solitary Indian would pass in a birch-bark canoe. We hailed their approach eagerly, for they generally brought two or three fine king-salmon, which are a most beautiful form of food. We used to give them a small bit of bacon in exchange for an enormous fish, and they were quite satisfied. The Indians talk a mixture of English and Hudson Bay trading jargon—a word here and a word there, and the rest by signs. They were, in common with all Indians in those latitudes, a most harmless set of creatures, quite different from the hardy, warlike Indians of the plains. They do not seem to have sufficient spirit to create a disturbance if they wished to. The fish dinners with which they provided us were

almost the only comfort we had in those days. It was impossible to keep dry by day or night. Our comrades down at Cudahy were far better off than we, for even if they had to work in the wet all day, they could turn into dry shacks and dry clothes for the night, whereas we had no means of drying our clothes in the pouring rain, and had to camp out on the sodden ground at night. Whilst we were cutting logs to build the Post, they were no less busy preparing a site for it. Drains had to be put in to any extent, and the ground broken by a plough drawn by a team of dogs.

We spent three weeks in all up the river. We did not lose a single log at any of the two or three mouths of the creek of which I have spoken. We kept a man stationed in a boat on the Yukon itself, and he always managed to catch the few that we missed. Before we finished we had built three rafts. The first one, which we had already nearly lost in coming down from our former camp, was a continual source of annoyance to us. Sometimes the river would recede, if we had a few hours fine weather, and then the raft would be stranded high and dry. We had practically to rebuild it three times. When the last raft was completed we had over four hundred good-sized logs.

We started on the return journey to Cudahy on August 16. No. 1 raft took the lead with fifteen minutes' start. There was an island in the middle

of the river just below our camp, and we had learnt from the Indians that we must take the left-hand channel if we wanted to get safely past it. We could see those on No. 1 making frantic efforts to gain this channel, but the current was too strong for them, and as we saw it rush impetuously forward down the one on the right, we thought that all our labours were doomed to frustration, and that the men on it would be lucky if they managed to save their own skins by abandoning the raft. Nos. 2 and 3 were equally unable to gain the left-hand channel, and in spite of all our efforts, persisted in following the lead of No. 1. In fact, we discovered that it was absolutely impossible to get to the left on such unwieldy craft. After an hour's herculean labour, we were forced to the conclusion that we must let the current have its own way, and accordingly stopped working, and left ourselves to its mercy.

It was more merciful than we could have expected; and towards evening we on No. 2 caught up No. 1, which was tied up to the bank in sight of Forty Mile. We came a terrific bump into her, nearly causing her to break away from her moorings. We were spun round by the force of the impact, and carried out into mid-stream again. Thanks to this I was able to steer No. 2 safely past the mouth of Forty Mile river, and run her aground right opposite Fort Cudahy. This was,

however, due less to my navigation than to an accident of the current. Luckily the Yukon was running a trifle higher than Forty Mile, and so bore us in to the left. When this is the case, there is no current in Forty Mile, but when Forty Mile is running higher than the Yukon, its current prevails, and everything is carried straight across to the opposite bank. Had this been the case at this moment, we should have been in truly sorry plight, for it would have been utterly impossible to get back across the Yukon in a straight line, even after the Yukon current was once more predominating. We should inevitably have been carried at least half-a-mile down-stream before we reached the opposite bank, and then we should have been no better off than if we had started cutting our logs three weeks before in the fine clump just half-a-mile below, of which I have previously spoken. To get the rafts back up-stream would have been out of the question, and we should have had no means of dragging their component logs up along the bank to Cudahy and the site for the Post. This serves admirably to show to what an extent one is dependent on accidents in a pioneering enterprise of this kind. In fact, as will presently be seen, the whole history of these districts has been very largely determined by accidents.

We had not seen raft No. 3 since passing the island, nor did we see anything of her till next

morning, when she was safely landed, with No. 1 following close behind her. We were equally lucky with these, for we succeeded in beaching all three rafts exactly opposite the saw-mill, which we had rented from the Trading Company for the purpose of cutting the timber we had with such difficulty collected, into the form which would be most suited for building purposes. This, too, was all done by our own men, and before we had finished, the greater part of the logs had been neatly squared by cutting four slabs off each. Not till then were we able to set about the task of erecting some sort of a head-quarters in which to spend the following winter.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE BUILDING OF THE POST

FORT CUDAHY with its saw-mill lay at some little distance from the proposed site of our Post. To transport the logs more easily over this intervening space, we decided to build a rough sidewalk, on which to run a light trolley. This we accomplished by laying two parallel rows of logs on the ground, after the manner of railway-lines, and then nailing short planks across from one to the other the whole way along. Where the ground was very uneven, the logs had to be laid on "sleepers." We had thus a long narrow platform on which to fasten the lathes, which were to serve as rails for the trolley, and along which the dog-team which drew the latter could easily pass. The site we had prepared was between Fort Cudahy and Forty Mile river, and faced Forty Mile town. This was as central a position as we could have chosen at this time, when Forty Mile was still the centre of the mining district, and it

was preferable to be out of the town itself. This was easy of access—by boats in summer, and by walking across the river in winter.

Our trolley ran very easily along the side-walk, and we were able to bring up three or four logs at each journey, which meant a great saving of time and labour. As soon as we had sufficient ready to start building, we laid our mud-sills. To do this we had only to dig a trench eight inches deep; below that depth, even in the height of summer—and I have already dwelt on the heat that we had experienced—the ground never thaws. At a depth of eight inches one reaches frozen ground as hard as adamant, which forms an excellent foundation for building purposes. In these trenches we laid our biggest logs, got them perfectly level, and blocked them up thoroughly with moss and other substances. We had then a perfectly solid, unyielding foundation on which to erect our various buildings. These consisted of long logs, laid on the mud-sills, and dovetailed at the corners. Above these came a layer of moss, which is an admirable draught-excluder, for it freezes solid in the winter; then another log, followed by more moss, and so on, until the walls were of the required height.

All this work was done by our twenty selves, with no outward help of any kind or description. The mounted police in these parts of the



THE GLARI ROOM IN COURSE OF ECTION (sh a n<sub>2</sub> the end / the side aith —Page c



British Empire have to be able to do most things from dentistry to engineering on a large scale, with a little navigation thrown in. The men are so frequently thrown entirely on their own resources that they would often stand but little chance of "coming up to attention" again, were it not so. It is perhaps a small point, but as rigid discipline was observed on the Yukon as in Regina or any other Police Post in more civilized parts of the continent, and when we are "at home" our discipline and regulations are as strict as that of any regiment in the British Army. It is the only system by which a force like ours is enabled to maintain order and command respect in such a vast district as that under our charge—from Regina to the Rockies, south to the boundary-line, and north to the Arctic Ocean,—excepting, of course, Alaska.

When the walls had reached the required height we turned our attention to the roof. This is built of the heaviest timbers to be obtained, as it must be very strong. It is here that the "slabs," which had been sawed off the logs during the process of squaring at the mill, were utilized. These are laid on the logs, flatside downwards, just like so many gigantic tiles, and nailed firmly down. The whole is then covered with tightly-packed moss, and finally with about six inches of the driest earth, which can be found in that swampy district. We

next cut out the doors and windows, fixed the frames and sashes, which we had brought up with us; and the building was complete.

Those that we now erected were naturally more elaborate than the ordinary run of buildings up there, for they were destined to a degree of permanency for which the miners' "shack" is never intended, and as far as we could we studied comfort and convenience, seeing that we had to live there for two years and then be succeeded by others in the same quarters. Our life too was to be very different from that of the miners. We had all our regular apparatus for cooking and washing, work (clerical and manual), and recreation. We had to keep ourselves clean and tidy. In a word, we had to aim at erecting as near a model as was possible under the circumstances of a decent, civilized set of barracks, in which we should be able to conform to the more important of the requirements of discipline and civilization.

The miner, on the contrary, is at work, either on his claim or prospecting, all day, and merely requires a roof to shelter him at night: his cooking and domestic arrangements are of the crudest, and he but seldom washes either himself or his clothes. There was a story—but that shall follow in its proper place. Whenever he has any time on his hands, it is not, as a rule, spent in dusting his ornaments and polishing his dish-covers: he is

more likely to be drinking—or drunk—in one of the many saloons which spring up like mushrooms in the midst of all mining camps. What female society he has is of a purely migratory, come-one-day-gone-the-next character, and he always holds himself in readiness to move on elsewhere at a moment's notice. His shack, therefore, is of the rudest description, but for all that its walls and roof are built on precisely the same lines as our Post, *minus* such importations as window-sashes, etc., which even with us were only inserted in spaces sawn out after the rest was completed. He too lays one log upon another, saddles in his corners, fills up interstices with moss, and piles on a mud roof. The only difference is that his shack, being like himself transitory, is of rougher workmanship. He does not square his logs, nor does he slab his roof or board his floor. But for all that the main characteristics of all building operations are essentially the same. It is only in the interior accommodation that the miner's shack differs from the Police Barracks.

In six weeks we erected in all eight separate buildings—not a bad record when you come to consider the circumstances. And there was no jerry-building. All we did was good solid “carpentry”—that, I take it, being the equivalent in wood to masonry in stone. Our buildings formed a square, and we also erected a stockade around

the whole, with a gate in the middle of the side facing the Yukon. These buildings consisted of a very strongly-built guard-room, in case of disturbances; a hospital; officers' quarters; quartermaster's store and offices; bath- and wash-room; together with barrack-room, mess-room, and kitchen. These latter occupied one big long building, which formed one side of the square.

It was well that we had worked hard, for as it was we only just got into our new quarters as the first ice started running down the river in the "fall." This was the first sign we had of the approaching block-up of the entire river and its numerous tributaries and their still more numerous creeks. And we had worked with a vengeance,—six weeks hard, continuous, unremitting labour after we had floated the rafts down and got the logs into shape at the saw-mill. During the time we were building we were all living in shacks, of which we had hired additional ones from the Company, and it was at this time that we had our first piece of "maintaining order" to perform. The whole "case" was of so amusing and novel a nature as to bear telling in detail. It must be borne in mind that we had as yet no guard-room or regular place in which to lodge our prisoners, which rather tended towards increasing than diminishing the comical element of the situation.

Before I come to my story, however, I must say,



a word or two about one of the institutions which we found already existing when we reached our destination on the Yukon, and which I have not yet mentioned in speaking of the various settlements. This was the Buxton Mission, presided over by the Right Rev. Dr. Bompas, Bishop of Selkirk. I introduce this missionary settlement at this point in the narrative, because, as will presently be seen, it played a conspicuous part in the little drama I am about to relate.

The Selkirk diocese was formed in 1892 out of that of Mackenzie river, and contains that part of the North-West Territories of Canada which lies west of the Rocky Mountains. The diocese comprises 200,000 square miles. The population is very small, though it is now of course wonderfully increased owing to the gold fever, and immigrants will doubtless continue to pour in. Indian Missions connected with the Church Missionary Society have been established in the country for more than thirty years, Archbishop McDonald having been the first missionary to enter the district in 1862. He has since translated the whole Bible into Tukudh, besides the Prayer-Book, Hymn-Book, and other works.

The Christian Indians of the Buxton Mission (up till recently the chief station of the diocese), numbered last year one hundred. Bishop Bompas, the present Bishop, was first consecrated Bishop of

Athabasca in 1874, next taking the title of Bishop of Mackenzie River, and in 1892 that of Bishop of Selkirk. At present the Mission stations consist of St. Luke's Mission, Rampart House, Porcupine River; St. John's Buxton, Upper Yukon River; and St. Andrew's Mission, Selkirk, on the Pelly River, besides Missions to white settlers. The Bishop hopes to start others shortly. Each Mission has a Mission-house and School-chapel, but no building exclusively used as a church as yet exists in the diocese.<sup>1</sup>

With this preamble I will proceed to my story. Whilst we were still living in the hired shacks, we had received intelligence that two men were going about carrying "guns"—the local name for pistols—each with a fixed determination to shoot the other at sight—before the other shot him, if possible. This was clearly overstepping the line of liberty which we always endeavoured to allow, and we had therefore to take steps to avert a catastrophe. One of the men—it did not much matter which—had to be arrested in order to preserve the peace. I was entrusted with the task, and succeeded in arresting

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted for these most interesting facts to the courtesy of the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, who also adds that the Mission is urgently needing funds for various purposes, such as churches, schools, etc. The Bishop's address is "Selkirk Mission, Upper Yukon, British Alaska, Canada, *vid* Juneau, Alaska, U.S.A."—H. W. T.

one of them—actually, the aggrieved party—and in depriving him of his pistol, thereby rendering him comparatively harmless. Need I say there was a woman in it? Even in these remote regions the sex is a power for good or evil. Equally, of course, the two men had been friends before the trouble arose which inspired each with an insatiable longing for the other's blood.

After arresting A, I heard it mentioned that B was getting married, and finally, after a considerable search, we tracked him to the Bishop's "Palace" The worthy Prelate was of course entirely unconscious of the fact that he was being grossly deceived I accordingly went down to the Bishop's house one evening, taking the other man with me for the purpose of identification. It was dark o' nights now, and when the Bishop opened the door I asked, without any beating about the bush, to see the man whom I knew to be there. The Bishop, of course, admitted that he was in the house, but added that he was engaged, and I could not see him. I pointed out to him, however, who I was, and explained that it was a matter of urgency; and, in fact, courteously gave him to understand that I must see him. This made the Bishop rather uneasy, but he at once let me in after that, remarking, as he did so, that he hoped there was nothing wrong, and adding that he had just married the

man I was so determined to see. He took me into his study, where I found the man standing with his back to the door. The lady was by his side, but I noticed that she did not look altogether as happy as a bride is usually expected to look. Perhaps the unusual circumstances under which the ceremony had taken place, and the knowledge that her newly-made husband was being murderously tracked by another man—who was at that moment, unbeknown to her, in the passage, combined to make her a little apprehensive: perhaps—but this the sequel will explain.

At the same moment that my eye took in these little details, it also caught sight of something which was, for the moment, of more immediate importance, viz. a pistol, sticking out of the man's hip-pocket. Quickly crossing the room to where he was standing before he was aware of my presence, I deprived him of this murderous-looking weapon with one hand, and clapping the other on to his shoulder, informed him that he must consider himself my prisoner. This seemed to surprise him, and he turned angrily towards the Bishop. I quickly informed the latter, to the good gentleman's amazement and dismay, that the man I had brought with me was also the lady's husband! This had been the cause of the quarrel as well as of the lady's preoccupation. One was instinctively

reminded of the passage in *The Ticket-of-Leave Man* : "Louisa, yer lovin' 'usband's waiting for yer outside."

"In that case," said the Bishop sternly, looking towards my prisoner, "the marriage I have just celebrated is null and void." Then the humour of the situation seemed to strike him, and he added with a merry twinkle in his eye, "and I have got the fees !"

"Serve him right too," I replied laughing.

B evidently saw that the game was up, for he accompanied me quietly back to the C O.'s shack. Not so A. He was a great nuisance on the way back, for he made persistent efforts to get at his enemy, and seemed to think this was an admirable opportunity to give him the hiding he so thoroughly deserved. Finally, I was obliged to knock him down by way of a gentle reminder that I was in charge of the case now, and any punishment to the culprit must be administered through the proper channels and not by him.

But it was precisely the administration of this punishment that was our difficulty—we had no guard-room ready to put him into, and we could ill spare a man to guard him. It is impossible to prove bigamy in that out-of-the-way part of the world, owing to the irregularities of the American marriage laws ; and the amount of correspondence any such attempt would have entailed would have

been enormous and occupied months before it was settled, especially as winter was upon us, and no mails could get in before the following spring. The difficulty of the man's keep, too, would have been no small consideration in a country where supplies are limited, and where we had only just sufficient rations for our own use through the winter. Altogether we were in a pretty fix!

For that night, at any rate, we drove a log into the ground in the centre of the largest of the shacks, handcuffed the prisoner, and chained him to the log with a trace-chain from the trolley. We gave him a couple of pairs of blankets, in which he rolled himself up and went to sleep. There were a number of other men in the same room, so we did not bother about sitting up with him. He showed no disposition to attempt to escape, and it would have been impossible for him to do so had he wished it.

But there still remained the problem of what to do with him. He was an American citizen, and we did not want any disturbance, especially as the boundary-line between Canadian and American territories was still undetermined. Still less did we want to keep him. We therefore determined to get rid of him. The man was a thorough-paced scoundrel and a coward into the bargain. His unexpected arrest, and the knowledge that he was at our mercy, had completely cowed him. He

lived entirely by his wits when he was at liberty, subsisting on the proceeds of his gambling, moving restlessly from camp to camp, and generally getting kicked out with a bullet or two whizzing past him after a few days' drinking and swindling.

I had, therefore, no difficulty in persuading him that I was going to connive at his escape, for it would not exactly have done for him to think that we were definitely setting him free. We should have lost our authority from the very outset. Nevertheless, we packed him into a boat in the middle of the next night, gave him a piece of bacon, and pushed him out into the current. We knew perfectly well that he could never pull unaided up-stream with a single pair of oars; besides, he would take very good care not to show himself in Forty Mile again, especially as he was under the impression that he had accomplished a daring escape, and would thenceforth rank as "wanted." The current would soon carry him down into undisputed American territory, where he could please himself as to whether he would venture into Circle City, or gradually make his way down to the mouth. At any rate we never saw him again, and never heard what became of him, and we were undoubtedly very well rid of him, for, in any capacity, he was about as undesirable a person to have in any settlement as I ever saw! Nor did I ever hear what became of the first man, or his wife—or the fees!

## CHAPTER V

### THE WINTER OF '95-'96

WINTER was now upon us—the long dreary Arctic winter, during which the Yukon and its adjacent country is as a sealed book, as entirely shut off from the outside world as though it were on another planet. There are no roads, the river itself is the one and only highway; and for more than six months the river is blocked with ice—not smooth glassy ice such as one is accustomed to in Europe, but gigantic blocks of jagged ice rising from an equally rough solid base. Winter in those regions is really a most serious matter, far more serious both for those there already and for those just entering the country, than the thousands of irresponsible folk who have crowded thoughtlessly in, in spite of repeated emphatic warnings, have any notion. Whatever it may be in the future, when possibly some means of constant communication with the outside world may have been established, there is no denying the fact that for those who



spent the winter of '95 and '96 in the district—those immediately preceding the present boom—the question of food supplies was a terribly serious one, and a source of grave anxiety for all whose greed for gold had not blinded them to all sense of responsibility.

Of course we were better off than most, for we had taken with us a complete year's supplies ; and as we were travelling officially, and could therefore carry Government freight, the amount of baggage per man was in our case much larger than that which a miner can possibly hope to get in. But even we were on reduced rations of flour during last winter—and flour is the cheapest thing to be had up there—and this in spite of the fact that the Companies had contracted to keep us supplied, which they had not done for the miners. The whole winter's provisions must be laid in beforehand, for there is seldom anything in reserve in the stores ; the cargoes brought upon the steamers during the few months that the river is open being all "bespoke" before they have started, and snapped up immediately upon arrival.

I dwell purposely upon this aspect of the question, for no account of these regions, tempting as they are, would be, in any sense of the word, complete that did not emphasize the criminal folly of attempting to enter them without a full and sufficient amount of money to lay in at the outset

a supply of food and other necessities, at least enough to *subsist on* for a year. It is to be feared that the worst of the many reports which come pouring in every day now that winter is again setting in are not one whit exaggerated. It is, unhappily, as difficult to exaggerate the suffering and privation that awaits the man who takes nothing but a pick and a blanket, trusting to luck to supply the rest, as it is to overstate the fabulous amount of wealth lying within a few inches of the surface of practically the whole of that large area.

Undoubtedly "the Yukon is no place for 'tender-feet.'" The conditions of existence are so entirely different from those that marked most of the other great historical mining "rushes"—a difference due, of course, to the locality of the fields. California, Africa, and Australia are totally different places to the Yukon, the reason, of course, being that they are—and have been from the first—so much more easy of access, and so much more in touch with the rest of the world. A man might be alone or lost on the veldt or in the bush, but somehow, by hook or by crook, he could generally contrive to struggle through to some place where he could beg, borrow, steal, or purchase food when his own stock had run out. Egress was never actually blocked, even if he had not the strength to fight his way out. But here

it is not so. Once there, always there—until the long winter is past. There is no place to procure food, and even supposing there were, a man could not reach it. Travelling over any distance is a physical impossibility.

It is just this difference of locality and local characteristics, in connection with the whole business which, it seems to me, the enthusiast has not paused to consider. He has gone through, or heard and read the accounts of, the first rushes to 'the world's other great gold-mining districts, and he concludes he has only to do likewise. He imagines he has merely to purchase a pick and a gold-pan, deck himself out in a picturesque red shirt and slouch hat—and get there. When once there (he fondly dreams) he has only to dig up a few shovelfuls of earth to be at once a millionaire, and live at ease. I am not saying that this was by any means the general impression, but I am afraid that some such ideas as these have been at the bottom of the frantic rush that nothing has been able to check; and, after all, the loss of one life as the result of such folly would be sufficiently deplorable and an entire justification for insisting on the point. When it comes to tens and hundreds of lives being similarly thrown away, it will be readily seen that it has become a very serious matter indeed. It is not that there is not sufficient gold, for there is gold to spare for one and all

who can live to take it out. It is entirely that man can no more live by gold alone—when there is no food for gold to buy—than he can live by the Tempter's "stone."

Strong men with enough money *to begin with* to lay in a year or more's provisions before starting from the coast will succeed: a "tender-foot" will go under, be he as rich as Croesus to start with. At no time should any man start with less than \$1000. The lowest sum on which a man can purchase his necessities and reach the fields from Montreal is £100; so clearly the "dismal failures" and the "might-have-beens" who are desperately resolved to have "one more last try," will fail ignominiously unless they can procure at least that sum. Those starting from England will want considerably more.<sup>1</sup>

The only difficulty we had facing us after we were established in our new quarters was that of fuel. We had been too much occupied in collecting sufficient wood to build a roof to cover us, to have had any spare time for laying in any supply for burning. This was a serious matter, and the consequence was we had to go out and "rustle" (collect and bring in) wood for fires practically every day, and every day we had naturally to go further afield. Luckily there is a good supply of small

<sup>1</sup> For details as to routes, fares, etc., see Appendix II.—H. W. T.

spruce on the banks of the river, but even so this daily "rustling" involved a very considerable labour, and kept us fully occupied all the time. We burnt from two to four cords every day,<sup>1</sup> all of which had to be cut, collected, hauled in on sledges over the rough ground, and then cut up into stove-lengths. It was accordingly just as well for us that the people were orderly and law-abiding, and gave us no serious or prolonged trouble. Making due allowance for the free and easy mode of life and somewhat irregular manners and customs which always prevail in such communities, we allowed them as large an amount of licence as was at all compatible with decency and the maintenance of law and order; but when a man overstepped this limit, we lost no time in "dropping on him," and so the people—naturally inclined to be peaceful and law-abiding: another difference, by the way, from some other mining settlements!—came to have a very wholesome respect for us. And not only were we shown respect, but we were always treated with very great civility on all sides, and this helped to make our task an easy one, much easier, in fact, than we had expected, or than it might very well have been.

The freezing-up of the river is a notable sight, though less so than the break-up in the spring. The first sign of it which we had was when the

<sup>1</sup> See note to page 27.

small streams started "throwing ice"—*i. e.* ice started running down them in blocks into the main stream. The appearance of this as seen from some distance is very similar to that of a "choppy" sea in the Channel: it is not until one gets nearer that one can distinguish the blocks of ice. These blocks rise from the bottom of the rivers, and are evidently the remains of the last winter's ice which had not all run out in the spring. It must have been frozen hard on to the bottom; released by the gradual raising of the temperature of the water, which of course reaches the highest point in the "fall" after the atmosphere has begun to turn chilly; and have then risen to form the first beginnings of the succeeding winter's block-up. This state of things goes on for a time, the progress getting rapidly slower and the ice thicker, until it almost ceases to move altogether. The river then presents an appearance not unlike that of a fleet of fishing-boats riding at anchor close together. The blocks of ice are still separate and move up and down, but their onward movement is for the most part checked by the river being too full to allow space for it. The tributaries are continuing to pour in their quota, and occasionally the whole mass will shift a few yards further down until the whole river becomes a hopeless and inextricable "jam," which speedily "freezes up rough" into one huge solid mass—a river of motionless ice.

So tremendous has been the pressure of fresh ice crowding down upon that already stationary, that huge blocks are forced upwards above the surface of the rest, and so freeze in, forming little mountain-tops of ice above the surrounding plain. Many of these blocks were as large as big houses. Sometimes great fissures will open up as they do on glaciers in the Alps, whilst in other places there may be considerable expanses of moderately level ice. Later on the whole is covered with six or eight feet of snow, which freezes as fast as it falls, and this gives the river a fallaciously smooth appearance in the photographs, the biggest blocks alone showing up to any remarkable height.

Speaking of photographs reminds me of some more peculiar experiences I had in the preparation of my views, some of which have been included in this volume. My outfitter unfortunately neglected to provide me with a colour-screen, and therefore many of my photos of snow effects lose much of the startling brilliancy of the originals owing to the snow appearing so dead-white in the prints. Isochromatic plates are useful, but they will not entirely do away with this defect. "Snowscapes," as I see they are now called, are in some ways the hardest branch of out-door photography, and some contrivance for neutralizing this dead whiteness and monotony is indispensable. Then the water of the Yukon (when it is possible to get any) is

normally of the colour of white mud, which is not exactly the most suitable for washing plates or prints. In winter water had to be got by going out on to the middle of the river and digging ice-holes, or by bringing in frozen snow and melting it. This was again a drawback to successful photography, inasmuch as one's supply of water was very limited, and not of the cleanest, and most of my plates show signs of insufficient washing, because I could not command sufficient water to "eliminate all the Hypo," as the manuals say. I used eikonogen entirely for developing, and borax for toning, and always used all solutions at a temperature of at least 70° Fahr.

However, in spite of all these difficulties and drawbacks, I succeeded in bringing safely home close on one hundred negatives, many of them, I think I may say, very good ones. The prints in my scrap-book have an interest which is probably so far unique. They were all toned with a solution made of nitro-hydrochloric acid and pure Yukon gold, dug straight out of the drift. This, mixed with water and a small lump of borax, was the only toning agent I had, and a remarkably good one it was. The prints are all of a rich purple-black, and fairly free from stains, especially when one takes into consideration the state of the water-supply, and the fact that many of them were made on paper which I had had fifteen months in stock,



and which had "roughed" it considerably on sea and land. It may interest amateur photographers to know that in addition to a supply of "aristotype P. O. P.," supplied by a firm in New York, I had several packets of the Eastman Co.'s "solio," which stood the test—no light one for a sensitive substance like that—exceedingly well.

It was on October 17, 1895, that the Yukon finally froze up. After that date there was no perceptible movement in the ice till the following spring. The head-waters were probably closed before this date, for the river freezes right up to its source, and the long line of lakes at the head are also icebound all through the winter. On October 28 the highest temperature was  $17^{\circ}$ ,<sup>1</sup> and the lowest  $15.5^{\circ}$ , and after that date it was freezing every night. On one or two occasions the thermometer was above freezing-point during the warmest hour or so of the day, but it speedily fell again. On the 29th, for instance, a maximum temperature of  $36.5^{\circ}$  was registered, but it was only for a very short time.

The last occasion that\*winter during which the thermometer rose above freezing-point was on October 31, *from November 1 until the following*

<sup>1</sup> All temperatures given are Fahrenheit, officially recorded by Mr. Hayne on a Negretti and Zambra's instrument. For list of principal temperatures during the twenty months, see Appendix I.—H. W. T.

*spring it never once thawed.* The first sign of anything of a thaw was on March 14, 1896, when the thermometer rose for half-an-hour to 39°. After November 10 the thermometer was below zero every night, and it was then that the cold weather started in earnest. During December and January it never once rose above zero by day or night. In January especially we had very steady cold weather. The average temperature for that month worked out very close to 48° below zero—or 80° of frost. On the 26th of that month the thermometer fell to 73° below zero.

It was a common sight to see a good-sized encampment of Indians with fires burning merrily, pitched right in what had once been mid-stream, and there they would stay during the winter, even erecting such comparatively permanent things as "caches"—small store-huts raised on long supports above the level of their dwelling-huts, not at all unlike the lake-dwellings in Switzerland.

In spite of the fact that considerably more than three-quarters of the whole mining is and only can be done in winter, the miners mostly stay in their shacks during the days of very excessive cold. A miner has means of his own of measuring the intensity of the cold, for he does not usually find room for a "Negretti and Zambra" in his pack. But his method is equally effective. He merely hangs out a bottle of mercury, which he knows freezes



F. 22.

ENCAMPMENT OF INDIANS IN MID STREAM DURING THE WINTER—Page 5.



at 40° below zero. When he sees that frozen he usually stays within-doors. Some hardier spirits take no notice of the mercury, and impose a severer test upon their endurance. These hang out a bottle of somebody's patent "pain-killer"—a mixture which contains a large percentage of pure alcohol. Now Ogilvie, the lexicographer, states in his 1882 edition, that alcohol has "never been frozen." The person responsible for that statement had obviously never visited the Yukon, for it is common knowledge among miners there that pure alcohol freezes at 72° below zero. On the rare occasions when a man has found his "pain-killer" thermometer—"gelumeter"<sup>1</sup> would be a more appropriate name—frozen, he has invariably decided that it is too cold to do any digging that day, be he never so hardy.

Our life during the first winter was more or less regular. We had no definite area to look after, and no fixed system of supervision. We made occasional patrols round the principal creeks at which mining was going on, but whether it was that the men were really a peaceable, orderly lot, or whether the mere knowledge of our presence, and the fact that we held supreme power acted as a healthy restraint, I do not know. Probably there

<sup>1</sup> Gelumeter—a word formed on the analogy of thermometer to betoken an instrument for measuring degrees of cold.—H. W. T.

was a little of both. But be that as it may, we had very little difficulty with them all through the winter, and no serious case to deal with at all. At first the question of the Boundary was still unsettled, and we had to proceed somewhat cautiously. When there was any little trouble we were quickly on the spot, and our arrival was usually sufficient to bring it to an end. As soon as the Boundary question was definitely decided, we patrolled round Glacier and Miller Creeks,<sup>1</sup> and collected the mining dues from the various claims. There was no Gold Commissioner there, and all this sort of work devolved upon us. This meant a journey up Forty Mile river, and then a long march of twenty-six miles across hilly country to Sixty Mile. It was very rough travelling with dogs and sleighs.

Practically the whole of the rest of our time was spent in "rustling" wood. It took us all our time to get sufficient to keep the (very necessary) fires going.

In travelling with dogs—of which I shall have more to say in the next chapter—you generally have four or five, which you harness to a low, narrow sledge. Occasionally when you come to a stretch of smooth frozen snow in travelling on the river, and your sledge is not too heavily laden, you

<sup>1</sup> These are creeks running into Sixty Mile river, which flows into the Yukon from the same side as Forty Mile, but higher up stream, and beyond the mouth of the Klondyke, which is on the opposite bank.—H. W. T.

may be able to take a short ride on it yourself, for they run very easily on smooth ground, and the dogs are strong and wiry animals and capable of pulling a heavy weight even over rough ground. But more often you have to run alongside, or even go on ahead on your snow-shoes to clear a track for the dogs and sleigh. In addition to your own provisions you have to carry all your dog's food on the sledge. The best "brand" of this is dry salmon. But you cannot always depend on being able to get this, and an effective substitute is bacon and flour boiled up together.

At that time flour was the cheapest commodity up there, selling at \$8 a hundred. It has gone up since, and we were ourselves, as I have already said, on short rations during the following winter. When a steamer bearing provisions arrives during the summer there is an immediate rush to secure them, and the two or three old log huts that constitute the stores, are not able to keep pace with the demand. They take good care, however, that no man shall get more than he requires for his own personal use, and so prevent a "corner" in any line of goods. All supplies are, therefore, on arrival divided up as nearly equally as possible. Each Company had their own steamers, and these were the only ones coming up the river in those days.

Our staple food during the winter, and practically during the whole two years we were there, was

bacon and dry brown beans, of which we took up a large supply. We mostly drank tea with occasional bursts of execrably bad whisky—which was not, however, included in the rations supplied by Government. The only variation to bacon and beans that we had was when we were able to get fresh meat or fish from the Indians, and this—the latter especially—was only very seldom. Some of us took up condensed milk, but the majority went without milk altogether. We were our own bakers, and also manufactured our own yeast.

There are two ways of doing this. If you have hops to use, you are a Sybarite and can make proper hop-yeast; but the miners mostly adopt the second alternative, which is known as sour-dough yeast. This is very simply made. All that has to be done is to mix a little flour and water and leave it till it turns sour, when it acquires all the leavening qualities of proper yeast. It has become such an institution up there, that one of the islands in Forty Mile river has been christened "Sour-dough Island."

The miners also principally subsisted on bacon and beans, with some caribu and moose when they can get any. These men generally have a little portable tin stove and a frying-pan in their shacks. With a frying-pan and a pot you can cook almost anything if you set about it the right way. Some men used to cook in their gold-pans.

There was a continual stream of miners passing



in and out of Forty Mile all the winter. The result was that the population was entirely a floating one, but the numbers remained stationary on the whole. There was abundant variety of all kinds, both of men and amusements. Several saloons were kept busily going day and night, and did a roaring trade. There was also a variety entertainment started by an enterprising manager with a troop of music-hall girls from San Francisco. The entertainment was really excellent, especially the dancing of one or two of the girls. Some of the scenery was quite elaborate: one of the favourite turns—a drama in two chapters—in which, by the way, not a soul appeared on the stage from first to last, had for its setting a richly-furnished and upholstered room with table, Chippendale chairs, heavy curtains, and richly-carved buffet with pier-glass complete! And this was in an almost uninhabited country within a few miles of the Arctic Circle. After the performance, audience and performers would adjourn to the nearest saloon, and generally contrived to make things “a bit lively” in the course of the night. But although they were noisy—often boisterously so—and there was a rough and ready unconventionality about some of the subsequent proceedings, I never saw anything the least objectionable take place when I was on duty, and we had very little difficulty arising from the presence of the saloons.

I think this says a good deal for the general "tone" of the pioneers on the Yukon, and certainly contrasts well with tales that have filtered through of doings in some of the other mining centres.

When he is at work the miner drinks little but tea and a small quantity of coffee, but when he "comes to town" he generally indulges in a "fling" for a day or two, until he is tired of it, or his "sack" of gold is emptied. Gold-dust is the currency there, and absolute honesty is the order of the day. When a miner goes into a saloon or a store to buy anything, he flings down his sack on to the bar or counter, and turns his back whilst the dealer weighs out the amount in his scales. The latter would be grossly insulted were he to see you watching him, and the man who was seen to be keeping his eye on his sack or the weights whilst the amount was being weighed out would be considered "no gentleman." Such a thing as cheating is unknown in these transactions. One man was once detected at it, and it was evidently held that it would not be good either for the community or for his own moral welfare that he should be allowed to try it on a second time, for within a very short time of detection a bullet had placed him beyond the reach of further temptation. This was before our arrival!

Drinks and cigars in these saloons cost four "bits" (50 cents, or about 2s.) apiece. As the

supply of whisky was very limited, and the throats down which it was poured were innumerable, it was found necessary to create some sort of a supply to meet the demand. This concoction was known as "hooch"; and disgusting as it is, it is doubtful if it is much more poisonous than the whisky itself. This latter goes by the name of "Forty rod whisky"—a facetious allusion to its supposed power of killing at that distance!

The manufacture of "hooch," which is undertaken by the saloon-keepers themselves, is weirdly horrible. It is as follows:

Take of sugar of molasses an unlimited quantity; add a small percentage of dried fruit or, in summer, of berries; ferment with sour dough; flavour to taste with anything handy—the "higher" flavoured the better—such as old boots, discarded (and unwashed) foot-rags, and other delicacies of a similar nature. After fermentation, place in a rough sort of still, for preference an empty coal-oil (kerosene) tin, and serve hot according to taste.<sup>1</sup>

A very small quantity of this filth produces an immediate effect. The price for this is also four "bits" a drink. Dropping in for a drink is an

<sup>1</sup> This sounds such an utter impossibility even to the most degraded palate, that I feel bound to state that these ingredients are word for word those given me by Mr. Hayne, and I am convinced they are true.—H. W. T.

expensive matter—if you get off with the expenditure of \$100 you may consider yourself lucky—for by the unwritten etiquette of the country, you must call in every one within sight to have a drink at your expense at the same time. To refuse a proffered glass is an unpardonable insult—the only loophole of escape left is to take a cigar instead, and it is a toss-up which is the least deadly!

It must always be borne in mind that during our first winter—that of '95-'96—the Klondyke fields were undiscovered, and all the mining then in progress was on Forty- and Sixty-Mile rivers and principally on the creeks, Glacier and Miller, which run into the latter. (By this I mean, of course, all the mining in Canadian, as opposed to American, territory.) Writing on January 20, 1896, Inspector Constantine says:

“Mining up to the present has been done with the pick, shovel, rocker, and water. No capital invested in machinery at present. . . . In a country where a man has to pole up a rapid river for some hundreds of miles in summer, then pack his food, clothing, camping and working tools on his back, or in winter either haul them himself or with dog, consideration as to where he can get his food and clothing is of vital importance to him, and he is governed accordingly. This accounts for the number of men working on the Forty Mile and

creeks emptying into it.<sup>1</sup> Even here food has to be packed on men's backs in the summer at a charge of 30 cents per pound, and in winter by dogs at 10 cents per pound. This is for about eighty-five miles. . .

"A conservative estimate of the amount of gold taken out last summer and winter is about \$250,000, and from the present outlook it should be increased by 50 per cent. A great deal will depend on Glacier Creek, which was worked for the first time last summer. Very little was done on account of the claims not being in proper shape for working. Many of the claims are quite deep, and will pay better to work by drifting during the winter, which has been hindered up to the present by the mild weather. The work done so far has shown up a large yield of gold. There is a little 'snipping'—*i. e.* working old bars—on Forty Mile Creek, but it does not pay much. There are a great number of creeks which have never been prospected, which undoubtedly would pay good wages if properly worked, and which will be before long.<sup>2</sup> In fact, there is hardly a creek within 300 miles south-east or north-west of here in which more or less gold is not found. The

<sup>1</sup> There was no settlement at the mouth of Sixty Mile, as there was at Forty Mile.

<sup>2</sup> How speedily this prophecy was realized is now well known.—H. W. T.

true value of the mineral wealth of this part of the country will not be known for many years to come, as new discoveries are being made each season.

"There will be a great deal of drifting done on Miller Creek this winter. This creek has been worked for the past four years, and up to the present time has been the richest one here, and is good for some time to come. On claim 3 below 'Discovery,' there has been taken out in the last three years \$55,000 in 500 feet of ground; this has been the best paying claim. Davis and Poker Gulches are each good for a limited number of men. There has not been taken from these gulches any large fortune, but they have yielded good steady profit to the owners. Franklin Gulch, one of the first discovered, is still paying well, and has been worked for the past nine years.

"About 200 men are working on Glacier Creek, of which number two-thirds are working for wages; on Miller Creek, about 150, of which 100 are working for wages. The lower ends of these two creeks are supposed to be in the North-West Territories. Brown Creek has been worked this winter. Bear Creek and Clinton Creek, on the west side of the Yukon, are gold-bearing, and in the Dominion. Gold has also been found on Indian Creek, Squaw Creek, and other small streams flowing into the Yukon from the eastward."

It is interesting, whilst speaking of mining results and prospects at this time, to recall what was written by Dr. Dawson, the eminent geological surveyor, as long ago as 1887. In summarizing his work and conclusions up to that date, he wrote :

"Forty Mile Creek is reported to be a river of some size, but more rapid than most of those in the district. It has, according to miners, been prospected for about 100 miles from its mouth, gold being found almost everywhere along it as well as in tributary gulches. The gold varies much in character, but is quite often coarse and nuggety, and very large amounts have been taken out in favourable places by individual miners. Few of the men mining here in 1887 were content with ground yielding less than \$14 a day, and several had taken out nearly \$100 a day for a short time. The amount obtained from this stream in 1887 is reckoned by some as high as \$120,000, but I believe it would be safe to put the entire output of the Upper Yukon region for the year at a minimum of \$75,000, of which the greater part was derived from this stream.

"The number of miners in the whole Upper Yukon country in 1887 may be stated at about 250 ; of these, 200 were on Forty Mile Creek.

"This creek is what the miners term a 'bed-rock creek'—*i.e.* one in which there is no great depth of drift or detrital deposits below the level

of the actual stream. It is so far the only locality which has been found to yield 'coarse gold,' but from the extremely wide distribution of 'fine gold,' it may safely be predicted that many more like it remain to be discovered" <sup>1</sup>

Mining was also going on, on the Stewart and other rivers, but though the strikes were in some cases rich, they could not compare with those already mentioned. These were doing very well all through this winter, though the amount of their "wads" (Yankee "pile") were nothing in comparison with those taken out of the Klondyke creeks in the following winter. Since the big rush to the latter, all the former claims, even the richest of them, have been deserted, partly from eagerness to stake out on the newly discovered ground, and partly because the owners of these old ones, which are "low grade diggings," could not compete with the high pay streaks of the Bonanza and Eldorado. A low grade digging is one where the gold is below the average standard of value. It is there in considerable quantities, but it is not sufficiently rich to warrant claim-owners paying the high rate of wages it is necessary to pay. The old rate of wages during the winter of '95-'96 was as much as \$10 a day,

<sup>1</sup> This and the preceding extract are taken from a pamphlet entitled *The Yukon District of Canada*, kindly sent me from the office of the High Commissioner of Canada, 17 Victoria Street, W.—H. W. T.



and when the rush to the Klondyke set ~~100~~ men got \$15 a day and more. This was higher than the prospectors on the older creeks felt justified in paying, and consequently the scene of operations was changed. Forty Mile town is now, comparatively speaking, as deserted as Circle City.

But I am again anticipating. Suffice it to say in concluding this chapter, which has already run on to a greater length than I intended, that mining was going on steadily all through our first winter, and with excellent results. The number of men in the country was very small, and all were kept as hard at work as they could be ; in fact, sufficient labour was not forthcoming to thoroughly work even such claims as were then staked out. I cannot refrain from expressing my surprise at some of the statements I have read since I have been at home, as to the amount of mining done in the winter. I have said enough to show that mining is practically done in the winter and in the winter alone : and yet I read on a paper—officially circulated and bearing the Royal Arms at its head—“During this time [winter] work is only possible to a limited extent,” and again lower down, after an altogether commendable warning, that at the time of its circulation it was too late for intending emigrants to think of starting from England, it goes on to say : “. . . the traveller would reach the gold diggings just as winter was closing in, and

mining was to a great extent stopped." It is quite true that it is hopeless for a man to think of leaving England as late as the end of June, for he would not be in time to get up the river before it froze up, which is what is meant there by "winter closing in;" but that is a very different reason from the one given, which seems to me to presuppose his being able to reach the fields. If he ~~were~~ lucky enough to reach Dawson or Forty Mile just as "winter was closing in," instead of finding himself stranded at St. Michaels or Juneau, as would probably be the case, he would soon see that he was just in time to run up a shack and join in the general *resumption of work for the winter!* Of course no one should dream of leaving England except in the spring, timing themselves as far as possible to arrive at the mouth or source of the Yukon about the middle of May; but it would surely have been as well to have backed up this advice, especially when coming from an official source,<sup>1</sup> with authenticated facts, and the real reasons why a later start is impossible—viz. the impossibility of getting in, not that there would be no work—rather than by stating as fact that which any man who knows the country can refute. I could scarcely adduce a more forcible proof of

<sup>1</sup> These words are copied verbatim from a paper entitled *The Yukon Goldfields*, drawn up and officially circulated by the Emigration Office, Broadway, Westminster.—H. W. T.

what I said at the beginning of this chapter as to the utter vagueness that existed in people's minds during the first days of feverish excitement as to the nature and characteristics of this district ; and the very fact of the publication of such statements further emphasizes, in my opinion, the positive necessity of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the true state of the case before thinking of emigrating to a part of the world which is as yet so little known, and where the very conditions of existence are of so entirely unique a character.

## CHAPTER VI

### IN WHICH THE BREAKING-UP OF THE RIVER IS THE CENTRAL EVENT

IT may, perhaps, serve as an indication to intending emigrants of the sort of outfit they will need, if I give a description of the winter clothing we took with us. The photograph of myself which I have been persuaded to reproduce as a frontispiece will enable my readers to see what we wore, and I need only mention the names and materials of the principal garments.

As a rule, when travelling on the river in winter, men wear fur-boots with walrus-hide soles stitched tightly round the bottom of the leg-pieces and along the side of the foot—not on the bottom as in ordinary boots. That is to say, the sole turns up over the foot on to the uppers, not the uppers down on the sole. My meaning will be made clear by a glance at the boots in the photo. These are strapped over the feet and round the ankles much after the manner of sandals. Inside these

men usually put straw or hay, which can be got from packing-cases, etc., the straw-casings of bottles, cut down to fit the boot, are also much used for this purpose. The feet themselves are either clad in three pairs of thick woollen socks, or else in one pair of socks and foot-rags, square pieces of blanket wrapped round the feet. To keep the feet warm is a very essential matter in such extremities of cold as prevail up there. These boots are either long or short, according to the number of degrees of frost on any particular day. The short ones, which just come up to the knee, are the ones most usually worn,—the long ones, reaching to the hips, being reserved for quite exceptionally cold days. They would be unbearably hot on ordinary days, seeing that the fur overall falls as far as the knee, and thus, with the long boots, the upper part of the legs are covered with two thicknesses of lined fur. The leg-pieces of both kinds of boots are made of the best hair-seal skin—quite a different article from the skin of the fur-seals, which is used for ladies' jackets, etc.

It is as important not to have on too much as it is to have on enough to preserve a good normal circulation; too much clothing produces great perspiration, which is one of the most dangerous states to get into in these cold regions. A man in a perspiration runs a far greater risk of freezing than one who is merely comfortably warm. Another

very important matter—more so up there, perhaps, than anywhere, though it is always a necessary precaution—is to see that everything put on is quite dry. The rule is to take off everything that is the least wet on arriving in camp, and at once put on dry things.

The “parka,” or long fur mantle, is made of reindeer fur, all in one piece, so that one has to get into it instead of putting it on like an ordinary great-coat. This is fastened round the waist by a belt or sash, and has a large hood at the back which can be pulled over the whole head and ears on cold windy days, as shown in the photo. The wind is the most unpleasant feature during the winter. To say that it is icily cold, and lashes the face like a whip, would be a very mild expression. To form some sort of protection against this, the hood of the parka is bordered with wolf fur, whose long hairs may be either turned back on either side or pulled right across the face to break the force of the wind without materially obstructing the view. Under this is worn a large fez-shaped fur cap, coming down over the ears, and on days that are only moderately cold, the hood is turned down on the shoulders, and the fur cap worn alone. The hands are encased in thick fur mitts—large gauntlets made with a thumb, but no fingers. These are usually lined with blanket. The advantage of this is that when they get wet

the lining can be pulled out and dried separately, the absence of fingers to the mitts rendering the process of reinsertion much easier than would be the case with ordinary gloves. A pair of long snow-shoes (also shown in frontispiece) complete the outfit, and these when travelling are worn strapped across the back, so as to leave the hands free. The great charm about this particular outfit is that it is very warm—the parka is leather-lined—and really marvellously light. Weighed on the arm, the whole set of furs is not much heavier than an ordinary ulster, and when worn their weight is almost unappreciable. This is of course a very great advantage, when the length of the journeys made in them and the great difficulty of travelling are taken into consideration. The miner's outfit, when he is not at work, is almost identical. When in their drifts they wear the ordinary Mackinac blanket suits.

I have already on more than one occasion alluded to the dogs which are such a prominent feature of life in the Arctic regions, and I shall perhaps be pardoned if I make this same prominence an excuse for devoting a few pages to a description of this animal and his playful little ways. It is impossible to over-estimate their importance. They are the only animals capable of hard work in harness, for which proper food could be obtained up there, and there is, of course, a

limit even to their powers of strength and endurance—witness the work we had to undertake unaided during the first days after our arrival. They are used for every sort of purpose for which in more favoured countries the horse or ox is usually employed, such as ploughing, sleigh-driving, and hauling in stove-wood.

But if their virtues are great, their vices are many. During the day it would be impossible to get on without them: during the night, one feels inclined to shoot every dog about the place.

The universal custom is to keep your dogs hungry, or, at least, not to overfeed them. They should always be fed at night, after the day's work is done. If they are fed in the morning, they get lazy and will not work. The spur of hunger—not starvation, of course; that would be inhuman as well as impolitic, but of moderate hunger—is an all-powerful incentive to work. If a dog knows he has to do a certain amount of work before he will be fed, he will make haste to get that work done, for these beasts are unusually 'cute, even for dogs.

Our team of four dogs was sent up by the last steamer, which arrived before the closing of the river; but we were singularly unlucky in this respect. The quartette were known as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Now John found the monotony of the steamer too much for him, and



so took matters into his own hands, jumped overboard and was drowned. Soon after their arrival, Mark and Luke, presumably not yet broken in to the rigid discipline of one meal per day, set upon poor Matthew and put in an extra meal off him during the night. We were thus reduced to two dogs, which we had to supplement by hiring others as we wanted them. Even the knowledge that they had been accomplices in a dastardly murder was not sufficient to make Mark and Luke live peaceably together, for they spent the greater part of every night in a series of indecisive and very noisy pitched battles.

This was the kind of thing that might be witnessed in any mining camp every night. Everybody has his dog-team, and when travelling up country several men will share one shack for the night. There are, generally, several groups of two or three of these—all crowded every night—on the beaten tracks. They have been put up by former pioneers and left there for the use of others who should follow. There are three such halting-places between Forty Mile and the Klondyke. Every one naturally wishes to get his dog as well as himself inside for the night, so as to protect them from the cold, and so economize food, for the longer a dog is allowed to remain in the cold, the more food will it be necessary to give him. The result was generally a terrible amount of bad language,

which was the least of the subsequent inconveniences. The dogs, of course, had all to be left outside ; but every time the door of the shack was opened during the night, a bundle of dogs would come tumbling in, all fighting and scuffling over the bodies of the unfortunate sleepers. They do not stand upon any ceremony, but come rolling in over face and all, in a wild hunt for food. Any that you may happen to have about you must be placed securely under your head, and even from there dogs have been known to extract it during the night.

After this, every one except the owner starts up and fires them out again, and peace is partially restored, until the next person leaves the shack, when the whole comedy is gone through again. The noise, however, of the dogs fighting outside the shack was unceasing all night. No sooner do one lot stop and go to sleep than another starts.

A hungry dog thinks nothing of opening a can of meat, taking the contents out and eating them. The men, indeed, do say that they are so sagacious as to know, without opening them, the difference between a can of meat and one of marmalade, though there is no means of telling the difference from the outside except by the label. If you happen to be in a permanent camp, such as Forty Mile or Dawson, and are so extravagantly luxurious as to wash your dishes after a meal, you will find that you must be very careful what you do with

your dish-cloth. I have seen a dog carry one off and devour it for the sake of dining off the grease on it!

I remember on one occasion passing through an Indian camp, and being very surprised to see several pieces of soap suspended by threads to the boughs of trees. I concluded that it must be some mystic rite, for to judge from appearances the Indian never dreams of using soap for cleansing purposes, either on himself or his clothes. Upon making inquiries, however, I ascertained that they were suspended in this manner to keep them out of reach of the dogs, who would invariably eat them if they got a chance. These Indian dogs are thin, gaunt, ghoulish-looking mongrels, with very long legs, and a general air of starvation. But the presence of such a commodity as soap in an Indian camp remains a mystery to this day.

One more very amusing dog story and then I have done. Another man and myself were stopping for the night near one of these collections of shack-dosshouses on a beaten trail close to the present site of Dawson City. We had a tent with us, and so enjoyed a certain amount of privacy. My companion was rather seedy, and we had no water to make any tea. I accordingly set off with a bucket to go and fetch some, and left him lying in the tent with a lighted candle stuck into a bottle by way of illumination. The stream was about half

a mile away, and I was gone some time. When I got back I saw at once that something had happened, and on entering the tent found it in total darkness.

"What the dickens have you done with the candle?" I asked: it was the only one we had.

"Done with it!" he growled. "Your beastly dog's gone and ate it."

"Ate it; why didn't you stop him?"

"I did try to," he remarked apologetically.

I should explain that I had left the tent fastened and that when I returned it was still closed, but there was no trace of a dog, and I could swear that no dog had run between my legs as I opened it.

"Well?" I asked impatiently.

"Well, I was dropping off to sleep when I heard your dog prowling around"—I had left him curled up asleep on my blanket—"and just looked up in time to see the candle, flame and all, disappearing down his ugly throat. I seized the nearest thing handy—an axe—and flung it at him, missed him, and did that," he added, pointing to a neat rent down the wall of the tent. The only effect his shot had had was to slit the tent open and so provide a means for the dog to escape. We had to spend that night in darkness and draught.

April was marked by very heavy rain, and the

barracks started leaking in a deplorable manner. The rain saturated the mud roofs, and then quickly made its way between the logs. It commonly turned into snow about noon, and this did not tend to improve matters. In the evening the thermometer invariably fell below zero again, and the nights were still very cold. We had occasional arm-drill in the barrack-room at this time whenever the men showed signs of getting slack.

What I have said in the last chapter and the first half of this one will, I think, give the reader some sort of idea, even if it be an imperfect one as I am only too conscious it is, of the general routine of life both for our detachment and for the miners during the greater part of the winter. I will now pass on, and attempt to describe that most curious and notable phenomenon, the breaking-up of the river, which marks the sudden and definite close of winter.

It was not until May 17, 1896, that the first move took place, that is to say, seven months to a day from the date on which it had finally jammed in the previous fall. It started going out very quietly and without any noise. Indeed the first sign of it that we had was the unexpected and welcome sight of a comparatively clear and open stretch of water, with only a few big blocks or slabs of ice floating on its surface, stretching right away down the river and up it as far as an

island lying in mid-stream a little higher up. Forty Mile river was clear also, and it soon became apparent that the ice from there had started running down in the night, piled itself on the top of the Yukon ice and run quietly out with that. Clearly there had been a jam a little higher up, for five minutes after we first saw clear water, the river in front of the Post was choked up with blocks of ice flowing down at a tremendous pace. Some of the surface ice always gets rotten towards the end of winter when the warmer days come; and this, which is known as sponge ice, floats higher than the solid and gets ground to powder during the subsequent rush of the more solid ice that rises from below. For some time past all travelling on the river had had to be done by night. It was about noon when the rush began after the lower portion had run out, and from that time ice was being whirled past us in a frantic rush that it is almost impossible to describe. Blocks of every size and shape were being carried down at the rate of thirty miles an hour, grinding against each other, now and again throwing huge masses on to the bank, where they stood, almost regretfully as it seemed, watching their comrades racing madly onwards towards the sea. For the first hour the pace was terrific and continually increasing. Huge blocks would get squeezed up by the pressure of still larger ones coming down behind them



THE BREAKING OF THE RIVER (the first indication of its start, *the first indication*) —Page 110





then a block in front would dart swiftly forward like a greyhound slipped from the leash, and the great towering mass behind would sink and disappear to come rolling up again half-a-mile further down. On they went, tumbling over one another in their haste and gladness to be free: down to the bottom, up again into the air, grinding the sponge ice to powder; blocked for a moment, then whirled on again until they were themselves pulverized or hurled on to the bank or reached a clear space where they might for a few hundred yards float onward more peacefully.

It was a grand sight to see this giant river waking from its long sleep, and a most welcome change from the monotonous sweep of motionless ice that had lain before our eyes so long. It was all so sudden, so entirely unforeseen, that every one was taken by surprise. The surface ice rose to a considerable height above the banks; and startled sleepers, who had perhaps only rolled home from a saloon about six in the morning, were rudely awakened by one of the great blocks of ice being dashed against the door: the town of Forty Mile was literally invaded by the ice, and had some all-powerful agency suddenly turned all the ice into water, the town must inevitably have been swamped, for the ice was all around it. When it reached Forty Mile river, in its headlong career, large masses of it were forced up the tributary just

like the backwater of an ordinary river.<sup>1</sup> Great logs of drift-wood were being carried along with the general rush, and snapped like match-stalks between the giant hands of two huge blocks of ice. One man, who was turning day into night, thought the end of all things had come, and rushing out in his shirt climbed into his boat and made off up Forty Mile regardless of the cold. Another had to clamber up on to his roof to be above the rising floe, and complete his interrupted toilet there. These were they who were "larryking" in town: the majority were working on the creeks, and so missed a spectacle that is probably unique in the annals of human experience. From a hill behind the Post the sight was superb. For miles on either hand nothing caught the eye but this heaving, tumbling mass, whirling past in the river below.

This lasted about an hour. At the end of that time the river began to fall as suddenly and swiftly as it had risen. Ten minutes later, though the banks, as far as one could see, were piled high with mountains of melting ice, on the river an occasional patch of open water could be seen, and the floe once more was below the level of the banks.

Next morning the river was as clear as on the day of our arrival, and the only trace of winter that remained was those masses lying on the bank,

<sup>1</sup> The reader will remember that the ice had run out of Forty Mile river previous to the general rush.—H. W. T.



10. SAME VIEW AS FIG. 9 - 1954



which glistened in the sun's rays as they slowly melted away

Ten days later the last vestige of winter was gone, and furs were put away. Our summer costume consisted of a loose regimental tunic of brown "duck," ordinary boots and long leather gaiters which covered the trousers to the knee. A large wide-awake replaced the fur caps on our heads.

It is impossible to say how long it is after the river is clear of ice at Forty Mile before it will be navigable at the mouth. Nothing short of telegraphic communication could have established this fact for us at the time, although it would, of course, have been easily done by comparing dates with some one at St. Michaels. One thing, however, is morally certain, and that is, that none of the ice we saw rushing past the Post ever reached the sea. All that escaped being stranded on the bank must inevitably have been pulverized long before it had travelled over the intervening 1800 miles. Even the largest blocks could not withstand the constant grinding to which they were continually subjected. Another circumstance too must be borne in mind. At the mouth of the river, the floating ice will run out on the ebb, only to be borne back again on the flow, and so navigation will be impossible for a very considerable time after the upper portions, above the operation of the tide, have entirely run out. But as the river is seldom open for

navigation much before July 1, and the ice had all run out at Cudahy on May 18, some sort of an estimate may be formed of the rate of running out lower down. It should also be remembered that a considerable stretch of river below Cudahy is in a higher latitude — well within the Arctic Circle.

The change from winter to summer and the reverse is very quick. In the latter the days get shorter and nights close in very rapidly, until at Christmas there are only about three hours of daylight in the middle of the day, and the sun is not visible for about twelve days. The rest of the time lamps and candles have to be kept constantly burning. This, as may be imagined, necessitates a considerable supply of these commodities, which is not easily maintained. There was a famine in coal-oil and candles during this first winter, which was the subject of a good deal of practical joking. One particular incident which remains in my memory will serve to show the sort of thing that went on, as well as the invincible *bonhomme* that was so marked a characteristic of the settlers from start to finish.

It was during the days when the approach of a candle famine was first foreseen. A miner who had some candle-moulds in his shack bethought him of a first-rate method of "taking a rise" out of a saloon-keeper who was himself equally fond of



FIGURE 1. A. F. H.





practical joking. He had plenty of wicks, but no grease to put them in. He accordingly mixed up some condensed milk and water until he had a pulp which in appearance at least closely resembled tallow. He put this in a pot outside his shack and left it till it had frozen solid—which did not take very long. He then took it in again, warmed it just enough to make it pliable, and then started turning out “candles” of this stuff from his mould, all fitted with regulation-wicks, and looking for all the world like the genuine article. All that remained to be done was to lay them outside for a few minutes till they froze again, and then pack them in empty candle-boxes, of which he had a large store.

He next went to town and told the saloon-keeper that he was “going out,” and had a supply of candles which were of no use to him, and finally asked him whether he felt like trading. The saloon-keeper, who had heard rumours of the approaching famine, jumped at the offer, and after inspecting them and satisfying himself that they were to all appearances genuine, gave him a big price for the whole consignment. He calculated even so to make a large profit on the deal when the famine came, and accordingly did not think it worth his while to waste one by putting it to the test of lighting it. The miner returned to his shack, and the purchaser put the precious candles, which were

to bring him in so much profit, safely away in a cupboard.

Now the atmosphere of a saloon even during an Arctic winter is generally stuffy, and after a day or so the keeper of this particular one noticed that something appeared to be leaking, but was too busy to look into the matter just then, and it passed from his mind. Soon after, candles, as had been foreseen, went up to famine-prices, and the wily dealer, after a good deal of pressing, confessed that he had a large consignment in stock, but could not think of selling them under \$1 a-piece.

"You see," he explained to his customers, "I must make some profit on them, and I had to give P—— a long price for them before he went out."

"P—— gone out!" shouted one of the men who were crowding round the bar, "why, you thick-headed chump, I saw P—— working merrily on Glacier three days ago. He was washing out \$18 to the pan!"

The saloon-keeper began to suspect a trick.

"Well, anyhow," he retorted, "he's got no candles to light his shack with, for I bought up his whole stock—and here they are," he added, triumphantly producing a greasy, sticky-looking box from the cupboard. "Oh no, you don't!" he exclaimed, as another man made a grab at them. "Just wait a bit. One dollar a-piece is my price,





and I should not be surprised if the second box goes up to \$2. Just look here, what beauties!"

He removed the lid with a flourish. There was a moment's silent expectation, and then a perfect volley of hoots and cheers. He held in his hand an almost empty box, containing a spoonful of congealed Swiss milk and two dozen wicks!

Of course the story spread all over the district, and many was the laugh at the saloon-keeper's expense. He, however, seemed to enjoy the joke as much as any one, for when P——, delighted with the success of his fooling, brought him back the money, he absolutely refused to take it. As it afterwards turned out he did not want to deprive himself of the right of getting even with P——, and his revenge was as complete as his humiliation. He told P—— that he had some very fine whisky, and asked him to buy. P—— was naturally suspicious, and before opening negotiations not only sampled it himself, but did so in the presence of a lot of other men, who one and all pronounced it excellent; and so it was. The saloon-keeper was far too 'cute to attempt to pay him back in his own coin by selling inferior stuff as good liquor. This little change of tactics put P—— off his guard, and he at once bought the keg—a fifty-gallon one—for \$400. Taking it back to his diggings, he proceeded to bottle it. The whisky ran out splendidly and as good as ever, and he put two bottles,

carefully corked down, in a safe place. The third, however, was not half-full when the keg stopped running. He shook the barrel, and, judged by its weight, it must be at least three-quarters full. He concluded that the tap must be stopped up and tried to clear it, but in vain. Finally he gave it a tremendous shake, and then his astonished ears heard something move inside. He began to realize that the tables were turned upon him, and so took soundings. Finally he decided to knock the top off, and then discovered the nature of the joke. A very small keg had been very carefully fastened inside the large one in such a manner that the whisky, of which the smaller one was really full, would pour through the tap of the big one. The rest of the latter was full of nothing stronger than water !



VIEW LOOKING TOWARDS FOX-Y MILE (1/2 MILE) FROM THE BEACH (1/2 MILE) - P.O.





## CHAPTER VII

### A SHORT ONE, PREPARING THE WAY FOR THE NEXT

AS soon as the Yukon and its tributaries were open for the summer we sent a couple of expeditions up the river in canoes to try and get some fresh meat and fish, but neither of them were particularly successful. I had myself gone on one during the preceding fall in company with another man, but we had had no luck at all. Though we were gone a week we never saw a single hunter, or so much as the track of one the whole time. We had rather an exciting time, however, for we were travelling in a Peterborough canoe—a variety of the ordinary Indian canoe, but considerably larger—and during our voyage, which was up Forty Mile river, we had occasion to pass through the Cañon which lies about ten miles from the mouth, and not far from Sour Dough Island. The banks in this region are quite steep in parts and well wooded. A low line of hills may be seen in the

background, and altogether the scenery is not at all unpleasing—quite different from the miles and miles of flats we had steamed through on the voyage up the Yukon. The Cañon itself is hemmed in by steep banks, and in the early fall, when we first went up, there was not much water in the river, part of the bed lying quite dry and covered with large stones. The river at this point is very narrow. On our way up we had passed the broken-down remains that mark the first spot at which gold was ever found on Forty Mile Creek, as it was then called. There is nothing left there now but the skeletons of some shacks—the four corner posts with their connecting cross-pieces at the top, and one or two logs, which once formed the roof, lying across them. The whole ground bears a deserted aspect quite different from that of the claims still being worked. Our hunting camp was of the rudest description, consisting solely of a piece of canvas slung over a crossbar resting on two uprights; but the view from it looking across stream was very picturesque. A clear expanse of water, here and there bubbling over the stones; one or two large boulders in the middle distance across the stream, and behind them a spruce-covered bank sloping gently upward to some little height in the background: altogether not at all unlike many a familiar “burn” in far-away Scotland.

[illegible]



There are many of these picturesque little bits to be found if one explores the many creeks that run into the tributaries of the main river. Cold Creek in particular is rich in them, and I got three or four really beautiful little pictures with the aid of my camera and some isochromatic plates. The banks here are much more flat, but the trees are thicker, and there is more undergrowth, and the hills behind might almost be called mountains. One view in particular shows a snow-capped summit, but in those latitudes a hill need not be very high to retain its cap of snow long after the spring has set the rivers flowing once more in the valleys. Cold Creek has a sinuous course that especially lends itself to picture-making.

The Cañon on Forty Mile river is not nearly so picturesque, but it makes up for it to some extent by having a very swift current which renders navigation exciting—not to say difficult. On our return journey in the first fall we “shot” it in the Peterborough, but we had two or three very narrow shaves in the course of the journey through.

It was not until the spring of the following year (1896) that we had our first trouble from those miners’ meetings, whose unfair decisions had been the real reason for a Police force being sent into the district.

By that time the Boundary question had been

definitely settled, and so we had no hesitation in taking prompt action to put a stop to this one, and, as it turned out, prevent any re-occurrence of such meetings in the future. When spring came and the winter's mining was brought to a close, some dispute arose as to a certain claim on Glacier Creek, one of those flowing into Sixty Mile river. The miners, ignoring our presence, held a meeting to settle it. One of the great objections to these meetings, apart from the injustice of the decisions arrived at and enforced, had always been that they were not content simply to attend to miners' affairs and squabbles, but they busied themselves by interfering with the private affairs of people generally, even of those who were not miners. This was of course intolerable, for even if the legality and advisability of miners' meetings as an institution for settling disputes among themselves could be allowed, anything extraneous to these was clearly altogether out of their province.

On this occasion the dispute centred round the claim of a man who had gone away for the winter and sub-let his claim, to which he had a perfectly legal title, to another miner. This man hired others to work it for him during the winter, as is commonly done, and then when the spring came and he had finished his "clean-up," he quietly decamped with the proceeds, quite overlooking the little matter of paying his labourers their hire!

These latter were naturally and justly indignant, for \$10 (£2) per day for a period of some months is no small sum to forfeit, even apart from the consideration that they had well earned it. They at once demanded payment from the original owner of the claim, although he could not really for one moment be held responsible, and of course repudiated their demand.

This made them more indignant than ever—this time wrongfully so—and the result was a miners' meeting to settle the question finally, although the original owner very properly refused to recognize its validity. However, his single protest was of no avail in the face of the numbers of those against him, and he was summarily informed that unless he chose to pay, his claim would be confiscated and sold by auction. As he still refused to pay, this was actually done—without any authority, and unquestionably contrary to the law. Whether it was that after the first excitement of the meeting was over men began to reflect upon the true merits of the case, or from some other unknown cause, the claim, which was a particularly good one, fetched a very low price; but sold it undoubtedly was, and the buyers put a man in possession.

The original owner then did what he would have been well advised to have done in the first instance, and came to us to lodge a complaint against the whole community and the present occupier in

particular. Thereupon a party of twelve of us, armed with Lee-Metfords and prepared for all possible contingencies (for no one could foretell how the matter would end, or in what spirit we should be received), went up Forty Mile river in boats and marched across country from Forty Mile to Glacier. I suppose we presented a formidable appearance with our rank and file and our magazine rifles, or perhaps the wrong-doers were beginning to realize that their action had been unjustifiable, for we experienced no resistance of any kind. We warned those in possession off the claim under penalty, and formally handed it to the original owner. We had not to make a single arrest, and after informing every one at the Creek that such a proceeding was not legal and must not occur again, we simply marched back to head-quarters, and thus the whole business, which might easily have grown to alarming proportions, closed peacefully and satisfactorily.

This was the only occasion on which the miners in any way attempted to assert themselves, and was a complete justification, if any such were needed, of our presence there. No ill-will was borne us for our share in the proceedings, and I think that every one was in his heart glad to feel that there was a force in the land that would protect his individual rights and those of others. Under the old *régime*, no man—those most to the



front in an equal degree with the least self-assertive—could be sure that it would not be his turn next to come under the ban, and the knowledge that any further breach of the law would be heavily punished afforded a general sense of security that was in every sense of the word agreeable. Thenceforward they continued to treat the Police with marked civility, and were always content to refer all disputes to the proper authorities. And it was much better for them in every way that this should be so, for they soon found that we gave every man as much liberty as was possible, and that the last thing we were inclined to do was to interfere gratuitously or needlessly. The natural result has been that this latest gold-mining colony is the best regulated and the least contentious of any that have gone before. It has been entirely free from any of the lamentable and scandalous disturbances which have gained for gold-miners in the past such an entirely undesirable notoriety.

Previously to the establishment of a Police headquarters in the neighbourhood the miners had been in the habit of holding these meetings to settle any little dispute, however trifling, and on more than one occasion a man's claim had been sold up, I am afraid wrongfully. This meeting of which I have spoken, whose evil consequences we were able to avert by one prompt assertion of our authority,

was the last one held in the Yukon district of the North-West Territories. They still continued to be held at Circle City—in Alaska—and many of the decisions enforced were of the most scandalous nature. I have hinted at the sort of thing that happened, and I shall add nothing to what I have already said.

It was just at this time that Circle City was "booming." People flocked there from all sides, and it was considered as the centre of the richest bearing gold-fields in the whole basin of the Yukon. It was an enormously successful town, and the biggest log-town that the world has ever seen. A lot of gold had been taken out during the previous winter, and as soon as this became generally known in the spring large numbers of men flocked in (although there were very few summer diggings), intent upon making arrangements for the following winter, when, it was estimated, fabulous fortunes would be made. As it turned out, more than one fabulous fortune was made during the following winter—but not at Circle City. Forty Mile was practically deserted by the beginning of July, and the saloons and variety shows in Circle were doing a roaring trade. Town lots rose to an enormous price, and altogether it looked as though the Americans were after all to monopolize the lion's share of the profits. They had made some very promising strikes on American Creek—well within

the Alaskan boundary—and this certainly, at that time, justified them in their belief.

Law and order are unknown qualities across the border, and there is no one in authority to make so much as an attempt to enforce them. The miners' meetings continued to be the supreme tribunal, and when a new strike was made, the miners constituted themselves into a self-elected committee and made all kinds of arbitrary bye-laws to govern the new discovery. The one that most affected men in Canadian territory was that no one who was not a citizen of the U. S. A. could hold a claim, thereby excluding our men from any participation in the profits, whereas, provided they paid the regular dues, these Americans themselves were perfectly at liberty to cross over to our side and take out as much gold as they could. After a time things reached such a pass that they enacted bye-laws on American and Chicken Creeks to the effect that no one who was not an American citizen could even work for wages. This was all the more unjust in that they themselves had never been molested when working in Canadian ground, and had never had any hesitation in flocking in and making themselves quite at home amongst us, when it suited their advantage to do so.

Later on, even after enforcing these laws, they were not one whit deterred by their consciences from abandoning their richest claims and pouring

in upon us again when they were convinced that richer pay-streaks were to be had on the Klondyke; though it will be convenient to mention at this point that they thought it advisable at that period to alter these same bye-laws on their own side, in case we should pay them back in their own coin, and attempt to put some check upon their incursion. But this was not till after the richest strikes had been made in Canadian territory, and even then they did their level best to "jump" the legal claims of men who had got in in proper time.

After the spring had set in the most irksome part of our work was to some extent removed. I refer to the daily "wood-rustling." We no longer required nearly such large quantities as we had been forced to collect and burn all through the winter. At the same time we had a good deal of work to do to the Post. The winter's ravages had to be repaired, and we also erected a very nice little reading and recreation-room. An interesting point in connection with this was that we went up the river and collected the logs of which it was built on the exact spot where the flourishing town of Dawson now stands—*i. e.* at the mouth of the Klondyke river—in absolute ignorance of the fact that a few months later a busy, prosperous town would have sprung up at this very place—the outlet of the richest goldfield in the world. It was

at this time that we actually passed up the Bonanza, and I took the photograph which I reproduce of that golden creek as it appeared in those days, when, needless to say, not one of us had any suspicion of the pavement of gold that lay a few inches beneath our feet.

May, June, and July were spent in doing various small bits of very necessary work, such as re-thatching roofs, and with the disappearance of winter we were able to extend our patrols, and collect the winter's dues. We also cleared more land, and in fact generally busied ourselves with small but uneventful occupations.

The first steamer of the year came in about the middle of July, with a cargo of furs. Previously to this some men had come in from the head-waters, bringing a very welcome mail. It was the first we had had since the winter had set in. We subsequently learned that the Canadian Government had sent one in during the winter, but that it had got buried and lost in the snow, where it remained for eight months, finally reaching us on August 14. This surely should be a sufficient warning to those who rashly think they can get in by this route during winter. If an official convoy with Government rations, and plenty of money to help it over the difficulties of transport, etc., fails, what hope can there be for an inexperienced and solitary pauper?

If I remember right, this mail when it at last reached us brought me alone thirty-two letters and forty-seven papers. It was at this time that we experienced the greatest heat—83° in the shade—and somehow or other it felt a great deal hotter than that in those hyperborean regions.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE RUSH TO THE KLONDYKE

KLONDYKE!—with a K and a Y, please!

The name has become a household word throughout the length and breadth of the British Isles and the great English-speaking continent of America. Cræsus has at last a chance of reposing peacefully in his grave, for his name is no longer needed as a synonym for boundless wealth. Our children's children will read in the musty annals of the past, "Lord Tomnoddy was a perfect Cræsus of wealth," and they will wonderingly inquire what sort of beast, bird, or reptile was a Cræsus. And in answer to their inquiries, "haply some hoary-headed swain may say,"—"Cræsus, my dear? Let me see, the name sounds familiar! Cræsus? Ah, yes, it was the old-fashioned way of saying that a man is 'as rich as the Klondyke.'" Whereat the children's children will pettishly exclaim, after their wont, "Then why can't they say so!"

And yet I doubt if the story of Cræsus, as told

by Herodotus, that prince amongst romancists, and handed down from generation to generation as a symbol of abundant gold, was more mythological than the fables that have clustered round the first discovery of the world's new Eldorado. If 'Klondyke' be a synonym for wealth, then surely will 'Klondiction' for all time stand for fertile, unrestrained imagination.

It was amazing on arriving once more in the land of newspapers after two years' blessed freedom from their tyranny, to read the accounts that filled their columns—sheet after sheet of pure romance: facts, stated as such with unblushing effrontery, which had no more solid foundation than the writer's fertile brain! One naturally made allowance for the American journalist! He is a delightfully ingenuous and irresponsible romancist. The mere fact of his writing unconcernedly about "Clondike" would incline one to view his lucubrations with a tolerant amusement. But in England things were much the same, though the statements were made with more caution and a "saving clause": a frank avowal that all accounts must be digested with abundant salt until reliable intelligence was at hand to "authoritatively confirm the persistent rumours, whose very persistency afforded them some cloak of truth," and so on *ad libitum*.

And it had all come so suddenly, like one of



André's pigeons, from the far-away North, that men were at first incredulous, and asked each other was it really true, or were these tidings also "made abroad." No one had ever heard the name before, and many knew not what to make of it. What was it? Where was it? Was it a new patent-medicine, or some new disease?—the latter strangely near the mark! They could find it on no map; no dictionary could explain. It was not until the little word "the" was placed before it that men began to realize that it was the name of a river, a tributary of the Yukon, which was popularly supposed thenceforward to flow over sands of gold. Having got thus far the more adventurous talked of digging gold out of the Klondyke—or Klondike;—and thereby stumbled grievously once more, as the sequel will show.

But was it surprising that folks at home should be so much in the dark, when we, who had been passing over the very ground during the preceding twelve months, had as little idea as they of the golden harvest lying ripe for the sickle all around us? And was not their scepticism justified when even the 'cute Yankees at Circle City—barely three hundred miles lower down—discredited the story until all the richest claims had been staked out by their more credulous Canadian brethren? It would have been more strange, I think, had it been otherwise.

And then that little vowel! "I" or "Y"? Undoubtedly the latter. There is no connection with our own word "dike"—a ditch or a mound. The name Klondyke is a corruption of the Indian "Thron Duick"—the "Swift" or "Deer" river, and by all the laws of etymology "ui" would become "y."

Which is all preparatory to the repetition of the statement that we ourselves had no notion of the existence of the gold until, on August 20, 1896, a couple of men dropped down the Yukon in a canoe and landed at Forty Mile town, then almost deserted in favour of Circle City. These two men were an Indian and a white man, who had been travelling round hunting with the Indians for the past ten or eleven years, George Carmack by name. He had never had any luck before, and he was one whose statements were received with a certain amount of doubt; for he would never acknowledge himself beaten, and always endeavoured to present his fortunes in the most advantageous light. This time, however, he had struck it rich, and had no need to exaggerate. He took a few favoured friends into his confidence in Forty Mile, and came across to us next day, bearing a sample of the gold he had found. He then duly recorded and registered his claim with us, producing his sample, and stating on oath that he had found it on the particular creek whose

locality he described. This, with the payment of a \$15 fee, legalized his claim, and entitled him to take off 500 feet along the edge of the creek. Creek and river-claims in the Yukon district are all 500 feet long, and extend in width from base to base of the hill or beach on each side. In addition to this, by the laws which govern such things, he was further entitled to stake out a second 500 feet claim, as the owner and recorder of the "Discovery" claim on a hitherto unexploited creek. This, as it turned out, made him the fortunate possessor of over 300 yards of the richest gold-bearing gravel yet discovered in the world. A fitting recompense for eleven years' perseverance.

The claim he had staked out was on a tributary of the Klondyke river, which in its turn enters the Yukon about fifty miles above Forty Mile. It was known as "The Bonanza." It is a fair-sized creek, about twenty miles long, with plenty of water all the year round, though it is too shallow for boats. The supply of water, in fact, is almost too abundant for mining purposes in the spring and summer. The view of it which I reproduce was a "bird's-eye" taken from a height above.

Even after Carmack had registered his claim and returned to work it, there was a certain amount of scepticism as to the real truth of the new discovery. Experienced miners, however, who

examined the sample, soon began to believe that it must be true, and for this reason. If you show an experienced man a nugget or a small quantity of gold-dust, he is immediately able to tell you the particular neighbourhood from which it has been taken. This he does by the general size of the sample, and by looking closely to see how much it has been washed. Now this piece that Carmack had brought in was unlike any they had seen before, though the uninitiated would not have been able to detect any difference between this and any other piece of virgin gold. Consequently they were unable to locate it to any of the creeks already being worked. This inclined them to the belief that a new streak had been discovered, and that consequently Carmack's statement was a true one.

Meanwhile those to whom Carmack had imparted his news were crowding out of Forty Mile, waiting till night had closed in so as to get away unseen if possible, and each one trying to get well away without any one else knowing he had gone. When I crossed over to the town on the morning of the 21st, I was surprised to find it empty, and secretly marvelled at the credulity shown by these men, all of whom were already in possession of good paying claims, in crowding away on the mere chance of getting something better. It was thoroughly characteristic of the



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ceaseless unrest that always prevails in mining communities, where every man, however successful, is frantically jealous of being "cut out" by his neighbours, and cannot endure the thought of being left out in the cold when some good new thing is being started.

From this time forward, right away through the subsequent winter, there was a ceaseless rush up the Yukon to the mouth of the Klondyke. No one, of course, knew anything of the extent of the new gold-bearing district, and so expectation ran high as to whether each new arrival would be able to find a claim for himself, or earn good wages by working another man's claim for him. Lucky miners! The whole population for miles around could be counted by hundreds, and only about 350 claims were recorded that winter. There was more than room for everybody, though everybody went in, and there were not enough men to do the work! And to crown it all, they had nearly a year's start over all the rest of the world! Little wonder then that fortunes were made that winter which will enable their owners to live in affluence for the rest of their lives, and bequeath a comfortable inheritance to their children. This, I think, is what makes the whole story so unique and so romantic. The idea of these few men—the whole available population of the country—digging out the gold in shovelfuls, secure in the knowledge

that no outsiders could arrive to contest it with them for a good nine months, is unparalleled, so far as I know, in the whole annals of gold-mining, and will always constitute one of the most noteworthy features in connection with the latest discovery.

Boats were at a premium. A fifty-mile trip up stream had to be accomplished before even the mouth of the Klondyke was reached, and the boats have to be either "dragged" (*Anglicè*, towed) or "poled" up the whole distance. The race to get there was frantic, and exceeded in the efforts made by the boatmen any race ever rowed under less arduous conditions. The nature of the banks all the way made travelling terribly rough. So far, during the first days, the news had gone no further than Forty Mile town. Every one was too eager to get to the new fields to think of going back to camp to spread the news. But as men are constantly coming into town from outlying camps, and the fact that none of those who went in at this time returned after the customary few days' absence, at last made those still at work on the old claims suspect that "something was up," and in they flocked, and speedily learned the news that was the sole topic of conversation. Of course every one wanted to start at once, but was delayed by finding no boat for him to go in. Even those who owned boats of their own, and had left them in "safe" custody



during their absence, returned to find them "borrowed" and the custodian departed. It was quite ludicrous to see them all waiting with their slender baggage ready packed, straining their eyes up stream to see if there were any signs of a returning boat. After the first few days there was as continuous a stream of boats coming back as there had been departing, for as soon as a man had arrived, put in his stakes, and taken out sufficient gold to swear to, he would rush back to record and register his claim, for fear of being anticipated by another before he had properly legalized it. The result was an unending procession of boats up and down the Yukon between Forty Mile and Klondyke rivers by day and night during the whole time that the rush lasted—roughly, until the end of the first week in September. By that time the majority of the miners on the Forty Mile creeks had gone up, staked out and recorded. Either the news had not crossed the boundary into Alaska and Circle City, or the Americans were so elated with their own "boom" that they paid no heed to the rumours, until they became so persistent that they were convinced that they were really missing a good thing. Carmack had returned with the first batch of pioneers, and so great was his excitement and eagerness to test the true value of his lucky discovery, that he was too impatient to work his claim properly and leave the "washing" till the following

spring. He simply began shovelling earth straight from the ground into a couple of box-length sluices, and washed out right away as he proceeded. Even so he was panning out about \$70 (£14) per day!

Here is Inspector Constantine's official report of the new diggings, dated November 20, 1896:

"In August of this year a rich discovery of coarse gold was made by one George Carmack on Bonanza Creek, a tributary to the Klondike<sup>1</sup> or Trondec river, which flows into the Yukon river about fifty miles from here, entering from the south-east. His prospect showed \$3 to the pan. As usual, such a prospect created quite a stampede for the new diggings. Men left their old claims, and with a blanket, axe, and a few hard-tack prospected on the new creeks, staked, and registered their claims, which in all cases gave better prospects than any other heretofore. Many old miners state that this creek is fully as rich as any found in California in the early days. New creeks are being found daily, all prospecting well. Three hundred and thirty-eight claims have been registered to date, and there still remain about one hundred and fifty to be entered."

"The country between Hunker Creek and McQuesten river, which empties into the Stewart river, is full of small creeks and gulches, which on

<sup>1</sup> In spite of this spelling, which may or may not be as Inspector Constantine originally wrote it, I stick to my statement, made upon Mr. Hayne's authority, that the "y" is more correct.—H. W. T.

being prospected have all given good results. It is probable that the gold-belt will in time be found to extend from the Klondike to the Cassiar, and that the whole of this to the Divide will prove to be rich in gold. Without doubt before long rich quartz will be found, but not worked until some means of transporting the necessary heavy machinery is provided, and supplies can be got in at reasonable cost. The gold-bearing creeks in Canadian territory on the west side of the Yukon are as follows:—Gold, Miller, and Glacier Creeks, all but one mile of bed-rock; Moose and the first fork of Moose Creek, one mile of the three heads of Smith Creek, and of the several heads of Canyon Creek, about one mile of the Poker and Davis branches of Waiker Creek, one and a half miles of Walker Creek.

“On the east side of the Yukon are the following creeks: Bonanza, Boulder, Adams, Eldorado, Victoria, Carmack, Bear, Last Chance, Hunker, Gold Bottom, and Baker Creeks. These latter creeks are all of a fair size, with a good supply of water for mining purposes, and easy of access.

“Bonanza is a large creek, and it is possible there may be too much water to be easily worked in the spring.

“A new post should be built in the spring at the mouth of the Klondike river, which flows into the Yukon on the east side about 53 miles S.E. of Forty Mile. This point will be the base of supplies for the new diggings, and will in all probability be the largest camp in the country. Nearly 350 claims have been already registered in this district. As the average number of men required to work a

claim is five, it means a camp of nearly 2000 workers, as well as the usual number of camp followers."

As to the comparison in the above report with the Californian claims, it must be remembered that this report was written at the very beginning of the winter, when the prospects, large as they were, were nothing in comparison with the actual results made known in the following spring. The prophecy in the concluding paragraph was a correct one, for the "booming" town of Dawson—named after the celebrated geologist—had sprung up just at this point, within a few months of the writing of this report. Up to the time of my leaving, however, no Post had been established there.

At first I was not inclined to go up myself. Even during the comparatively short time we had been in the district, I had seen one or two such rushes, though, I must admit, not one of them had been of so frantic a nature as this. There must have been some magnetic influence in the air, one would almost think, at the time of this discovery, for long before the richness of the strike was fully established on a solid basis of indisputable fact, every one was rushing crazily up the Yukon to the new fields. I myself continued for some days to think this was merely a repetition of former excitements, and that it would not amount to much in the long

run, and even made up my mind that after the first few claims had been worked for a while the richness would be found to have been exaggerated, or to be only on the surface.

But after a day or two, as one after the other came back to record their claims, and all reported in the most favourable terms of the creek, all agreeing that it was an exceptionally good one, I got a very slight touch of the gold fever, and thought I would go up and see for myself. This grew into an intense desire and determination to go up and put my stakes in with the rest, and so on August 28 I applied for and obtained a week's "pass," and started up with some others in a boat. We reached the mouth of the Klondyke—there is no gold on the Klondyke itself, by the way!—and started walking up to the Bonanza. Travelling was cruelly bad. The eighteen inches of moss was as wet and spongy as it had been a year before, when we had gone up to cut logs for the Post; it was raining hard, and the bush was painfully wet. We had to carry our pack on our back, containing gold-pan, pick, a blanket, and some food, and we had to walk a long way under these most unfavourable circumstances. However, we were in good company, for quite a number of others were trudging along on the same errand as ourselves.

When we reached the Bonanza, we found all claims below "discovery" already staked out, and

even for a long way above "discovery" there was not an inch of ground unappropriated. The way in which claims are staked is as follows. Every one is always eager to stake as near "discovery" as possible, and *below* it, on the assumption that any gold brought along by the stream will naturally travel down and not up. Accordingly, with the possible exception of two or three immediately above "discovery," all the ground below is staked out before any one thinks of looking higher up. A man who knows his business will take a fifty feet rope to measure off with; but failing this, one calculates as nearly as possible a length of 500 feet from the end of the last claim staked out. "Staking out" consists of driving a stake into the ground at the limit of one's claim. If a tree is handy, so much the better. One has only to braise off the bark on one side and cut out one's name and number, and paint it red. The number taken is that next to the last one appropriated.

The extent of the rush will be shown by the fact that, although I reached Bonanza Creek on September 1, less than a fortnight after Carmack's arrival at Forty Mile with the news of his strike, all the claims below "discovery" were staked out, and not only so, but I had to tramp a long way up the creek before I came to the last claim, and was able to stake out one for myself—quite up in the head-waters of the creek. These

are not usually considered by any means desirable, but in my own case on trying in the gravel on the beach of the creek to see whether I could get any colour, *i.e.* signs of gold, I at once obtained enough with my gold-pan to be able to swear to for registering purposes, and accordingly thought myself, at the time, lucky to have got the claim, high up as it was.

Having found my sample, I started back again, and as I walked down the creek, I met any number of men journeying up it, all intent on passing the last claim and getting their stakes in. There seemed to be unbounded faith in the richness of this particular strike, for the knowledge that they would have to stake so high up, which would, under ordinary circumstances, immediately have deterred them from going any further, seemed to have no damping effect upon the enthusiasm of the majority of those who were still coming in. Of course, in answer to repeated inquiries as to whether there was any more ground, I told them that there was if they went far enough, but that they would have to go a long way. I also told them where I was, about what distance they would have to walk, and what my first prospect had produced. This sufficed for the majority, and they continued their onward tramp.

Some of them, however, from sheer laziness and disinclination to walk so far as they found they

would have to go, even with a morally sure prospect of getting a claim at least as good as mine, turned aside and wandered aimlessly up some of the smaller creeks which flow into the Bonanza. I had passed these creeks a short time previously, and had even made a superficial examination of them, but had not thought it worth while to stop and regularly prospect. I accordingly judged that these indolent ones were going on more or less of a fool's errand. These small tributaries of a creek (which is itself only a tributary of a tributary of the Yukon) are known as "pups," and it was on some of these that those who shirked the tramp up the Bonanza now put in their stakes. I remember one man in particular of those who asked me about the distance they would have to go before they could stake out on the Main Creek. He had been a bar-tender in Forty Mile, and had joined the general exodus that followed Carmack's registry of his claim. This man, as I say, staked on one of these "pups" on the same day as I had staked high up on the Bonanza. In the following spring, as a result of his "laziness," he came out with me on the steamer *Portland*, carrying with him \$132,000 in gold-dust, which he had taken out of his "pup" stake! And this did not represent more than a fraction of his fortune. He had purchased the adjoining claim for another \$100,000, all taken from his original claim, and



left a partner in charge of these two claims, which were still his undisputed possession, to look after his interests during his absence. If that is not putting a premium on indolence I don't know what is. It was his intention to return this fall, or early next spring, and take out another fortune. I have since heard, though whether it be more than one of the many rumours which have got about I cannot say, that he has sold out to a New York syndicate for \$2,000,000 (£400,000)!

And he was not the only lucky one among those who hung back. The fabulous sums which have been taken from the Klondyke district in prospecting claims have almost, without exception, been taken from this particular "pup"—Eldorado, the result of a kind of "overflow" of laziness.

It was too early to do any great amount of hard work on the claims, and it was curious to watch the behaviour of different men. Some were provident, and after they had been down to Forty Mile to record and register, returned and began putting up their shacks for the winter, and getting in provisions, letting their claims stand until the water and surface gravel should have frozen and work could be commenced in real earnest. To fully legalize a claim, it must be worked by the owner, or by some one paid to work it in his name, and as this means three months' hard work, there was every prospect of a busy winter. Others were too restless to

settle to anything, and simply wandered from claim to claim, exhibiting their samples and comparing them with those of others, often, I am sorry to say, examining each other's claims very closely, when they appeared especially desirable, to see if they could not discover some flaw in the title which would enable them to get possession of it. The majority, however, neither built shacks nor wandered around, but went prospecting all over the adjacent country, to see if they could not strike another Eldorado.

This led to the second great rush, which took place almost immediately after the first. This was to a point higher up the Klondyke, and just over a ridge of hills that run parallel to Bonanza. The neighbourhood became known subsequently by the name of the man who struck the discovery claim there—one Hunker. It is in reality every bit as rich a district as that of the Bonanza, but there was no chance of working it that winter, for there were not enough men in the country to suffice even for the first-discovered pay-streak. Wages at once went up to \$15 a day, and even so one could never foresee the day or the hour when one's workmen would decamp to go prospecting on their own account. In spite of the fact that a sort of Trades' Union was formed amongst claim-owners not to pay more than \$15 a day wages, there were many who secretly paid more to induce their men to stop with

them. A great many claim-owners who could not get work in any other way would give a labourer what was called "a lay"—that is to say, they would give them so many feet to work, and allow them to take as much as they could out of that for a percentage, usually 33 per cent., but in some cases as much as 50 per cent. In this way a man holding several "lays" made very large sums of money, far more than he would have done by merely working for wages, for he could pass from one to another in turn, taking his percentage from each one. Sometimes two or three men would go into partnership in a "lay," work hard all the winter, and go out in the spring for a holiday, taking from twenty to thirty thousand dollars with them.

There never was so much gold dug out of the earth within a few feet of the surface, and within a few months of the discovery. The whole district simply teems in it. There is first of all Bonanza, with its "pups" Eldorado and Victoria; then just over the hill lies the rich Hunker district, with Hunker Creek running into Gold Bottom, and two or three other smaller ones flowing directly into the Klondyke close by, such as Bear Creek and Last Chance. Higher up the Yukon is Stewart river, where mining has been going on quietly since 1887; whilst on the other side is Sixty Mile, with Glacier and Miller Creeks. Lower down, the Forty Mile gold-fields now lie deserted but still

containing gold, whilst across the boundary are the rich strikes round Circle City, now also deserted and forlorn.

No, truly the reports of the fabulous amount of gold could scarcely be exaggerated. So enormous is it that men began to purposely understate it for fear of being thought to exaggerate, amazed and half-frightened by the figures which swelled to larger proportions every day. It is this tremendous supply—a supply which literally “makes one to tremble”—that constitutes the chief drawback and danger: a paradox maybe, but one which can scarcely be “rubbed in” enough. It is fearful to contemplate the effect of the publication of the news to the outside world, and the subsequent rush into a country where there is no food but what men bring with them, and none, when that is exhausted, but the little the trading companies can transport between July and September. It all seems so like the story of Tantalus! Enormous wealth waiting to be gathered, and the utter impossibility (at present) for more than a few cautious ones of these new-comers to survive to grasp and bring it home.

The difficulties of travelling, which, in spite of their having been so sternly insisted on of late, seem incapable of checking vast numbers of adventurers, and the utter isolation of the various districts, could hardly be better exemplified than by the following fact. Although it is under three

hundred miles, and down stream, from the mouth of the Klondyke to Circle City—a few miles more than the six and a half hour's run from Euston to Holyhead—no news of the Klondyke discoveries appears to have reached Circle until Christmas was close at hand. The statements were even then received with doubt. It was not until the miners at the former diggings had started winter work, and got their holes down into the gravel, and were beginning to get such large pay prospects as \$300 (£60) and more to the pan, that the sceptics at Circle City began to think there must be something in the rumours after all. After dividing all reports by three, they still looked upon the prospects as something so remarkably rich as to induce them immediately to desert their own diggings, which but a few weeks before had been confidently quoted as the richest on the Yukon.

The third rush of this *annus mirabilis* then began. Every one who could beg, borrow, or steal a dog team started to make the difficult journey. If it had been hard in boats from Forty Mile, the trials were increased an hundredfold after the river was frozen up—to say nothing of the extra distance which had to be covered. So great was the excitement, that those who could not get dogs started off, pulling their own sleighs, and determined to get there or to die in the attempt. Dogs went up to \$250 a-piece, and more than one man exchanged

a good claim at Circle City for a dog team. From the New Year to the end of the winter there was a continuous procession along the ice of Americans heading towards the mouth of the Klondyke. It was scarcely possible to look out from our Post at any time of the day or night without seeing three or four sleighs slowly and painfully toiling up. Their experiences were perfectly horrible. I should scarcely be believed if I related some of them, and so it is best to draw a veil over this dark side of the now famous "rush to the Klondyke." The reader who bears in mind what has been already said of the severities of winter may guess at some of them and shudder.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE 'CLEAN-UP' AND OTHER MATTERS

DURING the whole of the winter the excitement became more and more intense. Fresh rumours were being spread abroad every day, until even the most obstinately doubtful threw up claims in what had previously been considered good localities to go up to the Klondyke district. The first rumour had told of \$20 to the pan, and these increased in magnitude until they reached successively \$80, \$100, and \$200. And unlike most rumours, they erred on the side of moderation. The highest pan washed out on Eldorado during the winter showed \$800!

Work was going on as hard as it could be done all the time. The miners were a cosmopolitan crew. Many gentlemen, born and bred, were among them, though one could never have recognized them as such at the time. They looked like all the rest—rough, uncouth, unkempt, unshaved. But when once they got outside and shaved and

washed (not much time is wasted in washing during the winter), one would find it as hard to recognize the quondam miner in the spruce gentlemen as a day or two before it would have been impossible to pick out the gentlemen from amongst the rougher men. And yet there were several University men amongst them.

The Bonanza was panning out nearly as richly as its "pups," and, as though to increase the general air of surprise and novelty that was so distinct a feature of the new fields and all connected with them, the claims above "discovery" were showing the richest pans. Some men were literally so intoxicated with their good fortune that they were utterly unable to settle down to steady work, and just went around from one claim to the other showing what they had found. The gold was so abundant that when a miner went down into his prospecting hole with a lighted candle, the bystanders could see the gold glittering in the gravel as the feeble rays fell upon it. The oldest Californian "boys" were speechless with amazement, and affirmed it was the richest strike they had ever known by a very long way. It was so regular and continuous and covered such a large unbroken area of country, that men were afraid to speak of it in its full richness. It seemed too marvellous to be true.

And amidst it all the most unusual peace and







quiet prevailed. The miners were all thoroughly law-abiding, well-behaved, and good-natured. With the exception of one or two very trifling cases, the Police had no trouble whatever, and were everywhere treated with the greatest respect and friendliness. To such an extent was this carried, that if a man was wanted it was scarcely necessary to send to fetch him, and in any case such a proceeding was a mere formality. If there was any little trouble, we had merely to send a man word that we wished to see him, and he immediately came in and reported himself. This actually happened on one or two occasions, and I firmly believe that if we had sent for a man a hundred miles off, he would immediately have dropped his work and come in.

The coarse gravel varies from 14 feet to 25 feet in depth until the bed-rock is reached, and the nearer one gets to the latter, the richer in gold gravel becomes. When gold in these quantities is simply waiting to be lifted out of the ground, it is hardly a matter for wonder that even extremities of cold are ignored. It is true that this winter was not quite so severe as the last—the lowest temperature recorded being 50° below zero. But it never once rose above freezing-point between the end of October and March 3, and yet there was scarcely any appreciable suspension of constant hard work. The richness of the soil may be gathered from the

following account given by an old miner on his return to the States. "We had an offer to sell for \$20,000, and as my partner and myself were both old men, and had been laid up with rheumatism all the winter, we decided to let it go at that. They paid \$2000 down, and promised to pay the remaining \$18,000 in three months. When the time for final payment came, they had made enough money working only fifty square feet to pay it, and only two-thirds of the dump had been washed out. It can be imagined, therefore, how much gold there is in the whole claim, assuming that it is all as rich as that which has been worked."

The most romantic story undoubtedly was that of Clarence Berry, who started life in quite a humble way in a small Californian town. He went up to the Yukon district in 1890, and spent several years prospecting on Forty Mile and elsewhere, but without any notable success. In 1896 he returned to California and took unto him a wife. Whether it was that Mrs. Berry yearned to see the land where her husband had spent the preceding five or six years, or whether Berry hungered for the old life again, I know not. But in any case they decided to spend an extended honeymoon in visiting the far-away north. The presence of his bride brought him good fortune this time, for he struck one of the richest claims in the newly-discovered

district. He dug out from about thirty box-lengths (each 15 ft.  $\times$  12 ft.) no less than \$130,000, and found a nugget weighing thirteen ounces. The American newspaper report of this man's extraordinary good fortune concludes with this amusing and characteristic sentence: "Mr. Berry deemed his fortune sufficient for the present, and is taking his bride to his home in Fresno, where, in the July temperature of one hundred and ten above, she may find compensation for the fifty-eight below of January on the Yukon." But what about the \$130,000? Was that no "compensation"?

A brief description of the system of mining then in vogue—and which is and will continue to be the only one employed until the heavy machinery necessary for working the quartz can be brought in—will perhaps prove interesting to the lay reader as well as instructive to the embryo miner. I have spoken of the depth of the gravel and also of the changes in its surface during the summer and winter respectively. From the time the river has frozen up until the following spring, the ground—moss, gravel, and all—is frozen solid. In the summer 8 inches of the surface gravel thaws, but no more. This is then very full of moisture, and therefore this small surface thaw does not take long to freeze again under the atmospheric conditions I have described. As soon as it is frozen, the miners start their winter's work. First of all, holes are dug

out in the gravel varying from 12 feet to 20 feet deep. In these big fires are lighted and allowed to burn themselves out. There is abundant brushwood and other small timber ready to hand for this purpose. Naturally the effect of these fires is to thaw some of the gravel. As soon as this is accomplished, the miner goes down into his hole and digs out the gravel that has been thawed, and sends it up in buckets. The contents of these buckets are then piled up by the side of the holes, and these heaps of gold-laden gravel are known as "a dump," which, it should be borne in mind, is not the gravel itself, but the heap of it collected during the winter.

As soon as he has got out all the thawed portion, he lights another fire, and the same operation is repeated, the holes getting deeper and wider as the operation proceeds. By and by galleries and shafts are run out in all directions from the original hole, until in time the claim is completely worked—a process that is only accomplished in the majority of claims after two or more seasons' hard labour. Where the whole ground is not unbrokenly auriferous, the galleries and "drifts" of course follow the pay-streak, and to make sure that this is not being lost, most men will wash out one pan from the dump each evening, so as to see how they are getting on, and make sure they are not off the pay-streak. One story will serve to

illustrate what I mean as well as further to attest the richness of the Klondyke diggings.

One man who thus made it a regular practice to wash out a small quantity of his gravel every night, used to fill his gold-pan from his dump, and take it into his shack for the purpose. He had a claim above "discovery," and it soon proved to be of exceeding richness. He started panning out \$70 to the pan, and went steadily forward. This regular increase and the man's excitement over his evening's test soon became so well known, that his shack was the nightly rendezvous of all the neighbouring claim-owners, and the proceedings were invariably watched with the keenest interest, not always unmixed with envy. Naturally the fortunate digger was always very jubilant, and his replies to the regular form of salutation, "Well, Jim, what's she panning out to-day?" went on steadily increasing in amount until they regularly averaged \$120 to the pan at last <sup>1</sup>—and a panful is of course only a very small fraction of the day's dump.

One night the neighbours trooped in as usual, but found him sitting down with a very long face instead of his usual beaming smiles of satisfaction. They all inquired what was the matter, but at first he would do nothing but shake his head sadly and

<sup>1</sup> This would not have been a high figure for a *single* pan in those days, but for one man's dump to *average* \$120 day after day was little short of phenomenal.—H. W. T.

look wistfully at the pan. Finally, however, he yielded to their entreaties to tell them "what was up," and exclaimed in tones of sepulchral melancholy: "I'm off the pay-streak, boys. *I only got \$57 (£11 4s. od.) to the pan to-day!*" Of course he was in reality still in the heart of a very rich pay-streak, but he was so accustomed to larger results from his nightly tests, that the first time he had a slight fall, he at once dropped from the acme of triumph to the depths of despair, and concluded that his claim was exhausted. And yet a few months before the same man would have regarded \$57 to the pan as something quite exceptional from a claim on one of the older creeks.

The term "pay-streak," of course, means a streak or belt of gravel or sand containing gold, of a varying number of feet in depth, immediately above the bed-rock. The extent of this may be generally estimated with tolerable precision by sinking a series of holes in various places over the whole extent of the claim. It is impossible to estimate the value of the quartz in the district owing to the lack of the necessary machinery and the practical impossibility of getting any in by the present tedious and difficult methods of locomotion. But there is little doubt that it is very rich in gold, and I should not be surprised if it showed almost as rich as the gravel when proper crushing machinery has been installed—whenever that may be. In a most



interesting interview that appeared in the London *Daily Chronicle* a short time ago Dr. Dawson, to whom allusion has more than once been made, said he "did not hesitate to express his belief that there are deposits of gold-bearing quartz, and that the placer mining which has so far been done is the mere 'advance guard' of the more serious operations of quartz-mining which will follow the introduction of mining machinery and improved means of getting into and leaving the country."

And the interview concluded with these words full of prophecy :

"Briefly stated, I should say that the placer mining now fairly begun on the Klondike (*sic*) is likely to continue for a number of years, the maximum output being attained probably next year or the year after. Meanwhile, the whole country will be filled with prospectors, and, although it is not probable that many more streams as rich as the Klondyke will be found, the very general distribution of fine gold along the rivers of the whole district with the geological structure of the country so far as this is known, go to show that other rich placer mining districts will undoubtedly be discovered. Each of these will have a similar history, but in the meantime quartz-mining will be developed, the conditions will become more settled, and agriculture, such as the climate admits of, will be prosecuted to such an extent as may be called for by local requirements. A considerable population will become resident in the Yukon district, and railways will be provided

to connect it with the Canadian system. Another important result which will flow from the opening up of this district will be the early development of the mineral resources of the whole belt of country, hundreds of miles in length, which lies between it and the southern part of British Columbia. It required only the discovery of these rich far northern gold-fields to induce the miner to investigate the whole territory, and this will now very rapidly follow."

Mr. W. Ogilvie, who conducted a geological survey on behalf of the Canadian Government, also writes on January 23, 1897 :

"A quartz lode showing free gold has been located on one of the creeks. The quartz, I understand from a reliable source, is rich as tested over \$100 to the ton. The lode appears to run from 3 to 8 feet in thickness, and lies about nineteen miles from the Yukon river. Coal is found on the upper part of the Klondyke, so that the facilities for working are good and convenient."

Altogether, therefore, it seems to be the general opinion that the Klondyke has—to use a vulgar phrase—"come to stay."

But my definition of the term "pay-streak" has led me far afield. *Revenons à nos—mineurs.* When the river has quite broken up in the early spring, the second stage of the mining is entered upon. This consists of the "clean-up." The first thing to do is to put in a dam to regulate and

control the flow of the newly-awakened stream. Then lengths of 12-feet sluice-boxes are put in. These are made of 10-inch boards. In the last two lengths gratings—"riffles" is the miners' name for them—are placed at intervals to prevent the gold being washed out by the force of the water which carries away the gravel.

The miner then attacks his dump, which has probably by this time grown to very respectable proportions. This he shovels into the sluice-boxes and washes it through them, regulating the flow of water by means of the dam at the end of the sluice. The gravel goes out with the water at the far end, and the gold is caught by the "riffles." This continues all day, the miner shovelling in a fresh lot of dump as fast as the water carries off the last. At the end of the day the water is shut off and the riffles taken out. A slower stream of water is then allowed to trickle through—just enough, in fact, to wash the gold gently out into a big box placed conveniently at the end of the sluice to receive it. This box is known as the "mud-box"—and is in theory the same as a gold-pan on a bigger scale. Finally, the gold collected is once more washed, and then dried and weighed. This is done at least every day, and in the case of very rich dumps, more frequently than that.

When all the winter's dump has been sluiced, men who have no summer diggings either lie idle

in town, go out by the steamers, cut wood and repair their shacks, or (in the majority of cases) go off prospecting new claims. It is a very difficult matter, especially on the Bonanza, to get out a dump in summer owing to the abundance of water. It is practically impossible to treat the surface gravel (then thawed) as a dump and sluice it straight away except in very shallow diggings, for as soon as the water has been sluiced off, a fresh supply pours in to take its place. This meddlesome element is absent in winter, owing, of course, to the river being frozen. The same difficulty confronts a man who tries to get down below the eight inches of thawed gravel, and work in the frost as in winter. Even supposing he succeeded in damming the flow from the creek itself, he would no sooner have made his hole or drift (a gallery running underground from a hole) than the water from the neighbouring surface would drain in and put out his fire before it was well alight. He is thus in a quandary. He cannot sluice off the thaw, and he cannot thaw the frost. The consequence is that on the majority of claims active mining is at an end as soon as the preceding winter's dump has been washed out.

The gold is finally packed in tins and conveyed to the nearest Company's stores. It is then usually put into safes, and left there until the owners go out; sometimes, however, the miners make an





arrangement with the Companies and change it into money at once, but as the Companies naturally look for their profit on the transaction, the men as a rule prefer to take it home with them in the dust, and trade direct with the mint and other agencies.

There was a very "tall" story going about last spring. I give it for what it is worth, but will not vouch for its accuracy. One man who sported a very long pair of whiskers had been working hard in his drift all through the winter, and as was the custom neither washed nor shaved. In the spring he cut his whiskers off preparatory to shaving his face clean. His partner secured the whiskers, washed them out in his gold-pan and collected \$27 as the result!

Directly after the first rush to the Klondyke had subsided a little, and before the ground was sufficiently frozen to allow of regular work, men had begun to stake out town claims at the point where the Klondyke flows into the Yukon. Some people started putting up houses there during the winter; a saloon, a barber's shop, and a few similar institutions rapidly sprung into existence, and in an incredibly short space of time a roaring mining camp had sprung up on the spot whence a few weeks before we had brought the logs for our reading-room. Every one started building in the spring after the "clean-up" was finished, and the

result was "Dawson City"—a collection of log-houses precisely similar to Forty Mile town a little lower down, but far more prosperous and "booming" than that now-deserted place had ever been even in its palmiest days. Big saloons, dancing-halls, stores, and even theatres (occupied by "touring companies" from San Francisco) sprang up like mushrooms. Gambling of every conceivable kind, and drinking galore, were soon in full swing night and day unceasingly. But with it all they preserved their character of law-abiding, well-behaved "citizens." An Indian settlement, which went by the appropriate name of "Louse Town," sprang up on the opposite bank of the Klondyke.

Everybody had more money than he knew what to do with. Poverty or even scarcity of money was unknown. The only thing that was scarce was provisions. One man had more than a flour-barrel full of gold-dust, and would willingly have paid half of it for a square meal. Things reached such a pass that men never knew where they would get their next meal. With fabulous stores of wealth, they had just to sit down with empty stomachs and wait as patiently as they could for a steamer to come up with food and take them out again. The utter mockery and vanity of riches—and riches only—has probably never been more strikingly or forcibly demonstrated. Game was non-existent, or, at the best, very scarce.



I had shot two birds in my trip to the new diggings, but it was a piece of luck which I never afterwards repeated. There were a few moose, but they were soon all killed or frightened away.

In the midst of all the anxiety there was one very amusing incident, which the mention of moose recalls to me. After much difficulty and a journey on the ice which lasted from Christmas to March, some one had succeeded in bringing a mule from Circle City to the Klondyke, hoping it might be of use as a pack animal. But when it at last arrived, the poor brute was good for nothing. There was no proper food for it, and it had to eke out its miserable existence on dogs' meat. The owner, however, clung to it tenaciously, and vowed terrible vengeance against any one who should kill it. One day a man was out with his gun looking for moose, and saw a large animal, which he took for one, lying among some thick bushes. He stalked it for about an hour without being able to get near enough to see whether it was really a moose or the aforesaid mule. He was afraid to risk a shot in case it was the latter, for he was a wise man and recalled the owner's threats. Presently the animal took fright and dashed off. The hunter fired without pausing for aim, missed, and had the mortification of seeing that it was beyond doubt a magnificent moose, well out of range, and running for its life.

Next day he went out again, and once more saw a large animal which he declared was the identical one he had missed on the previous day, standing on almost the same spot where he had first seen the moose. He determined that he would not be fooled this time, and after a careful aim pulled the trigger, and this time had the satisfaction of seeing his "bag" drop dead amid the bushes a few yards from him. Imagine his astonishment and disgust when on hurrying to the spot, he found he had killed the precious mule! He got off cheap with \$500.

## CHAPTER X

### 'AU REVOIR'

THERE is but little more to tell, and it is best told quickly. The summer of '97 was very similar in its daily routine to the previous one—only, as some one tersely described it, "more so." Dawson was booming in a way that completely eclipsed all previous records of Forty Mile, or even Circle City. Prospecting was going on in all directions, and men tried to forget that they were hungry millionaires as they busied themselves with repairing their shacks or applauding the 'Frisco Variety girls. The barber's shop did a roaring trade. Every one wanted to get shaved and have *his* annual "clean-up" as soon as that of his gold was concluded. Our head-quarters were still at Forty Mile, but a patrol of us was always in Dawson and up and down the Klondyke. Those of us who had claims used to visit them occasionally, just to see that things were going on all right in our absence when we, of course, hired men to

work them for us. Our two years' service was nearly finished, and, with the exception of five of us, all intended to take their discharge up there on August 1, and go in for mining pure and simple. The prospects were better, and "promotion" more sure. The relief of twenty-one men arrived in the early part of June, having taken a different route to the one by which we had come. The object no doubt was to get in earlier than they would have done had they gone to St. Michaels and waited for the breaking-up of the river. They came down from the head-waters in three boats, having travelled *via* Juneau and Dyea, and built their own boats. It took them about two months to get in, and was by no means an easy task.

Carmack's discovery and the subsequent rich strikes had taken place too late in the preceding year for anything more than vague rumours of it to reach the outside world. This is hardly surprising when we remember that it was nearly Christmas before it travelled as far as Circle City. Consequently the rush that has taken place during the last few months had not begun when I left.

Five of us went out on the *P. B. Wcare*—the boat which had brought us up two long years before. Those who had claims either sold them or left partners to look after their interests during their absence. Claims were so rich that it quite paid to run them by a syndicate of three, and

### *Erratum.*

Page 171, line 23, for 'at the rate of exchange then current, \$18 to the ounce, this represented \$967,680, or about £193,536' (as now printed), *read* 'at the rate of exchange then current, \$17, this represented \$913,920, or about £182,784.

still reap abundant wealth. We were accompanied on the steamer by a large crowd of successful and wealthy miners, the majority of whom left with the full intention of returning to get more gold. There was not one who had not sufficient money to ensure him an easy competence for the rest of his days—"to see him through," as they expressed it. The weight of the gold on board was enormous, and no one could say exactly how much there was. A ton and a half was stored in the purser's cabin, and so unwonted a strain necessitated the shoring-up of the deck with props. But this did not nearly represent the total freight of gold; for all that was placed in the purser's cabin was charged a substantial percentage, and many did not see paying this. Blankets full of gold-dust lay about on deck in absolute security and unconcern. Their own weight was a sufficient safeguard against any attempt at unlawful removal. It took two men to lift one of these improvised sacks.

The value in the purser's cabin may easily be calculated. A ton and a half is 53,760 ounces, and at the rate of exchange then current, \$18 to the ounce, this represented \$967,680, or about £193,536.

The return journey down the river was a great improvement on the former one in every way. To begin with, we were travelling swiftly down with the current, and did the 1800 miles in eight

days, which gives the very respectable speed for a heavily-laden stern-wheeler of nearly ten knots an hour inclusive of stoppages for fuel. Another reason that it was more bearable was, perhaps, that we were now veterans returning home with the spoils of war, instead of pioneers toiling slowly towards an unknown land with staff and scrip and fixed rations for a limited time only.

We only stayed long enough at St. Michaels to give time for the precious cargo to be transferred from the river steamer that had played so conspicuous a part in the prologue and epilogue of our little drama, to the more capacious hold of the s.s. *Portland*, on which we were to make the return trip to Seattle. As soon as this was accomplished we went on the *Portland* ourselves, and got under way for Unalashka, after more than two years' absence. I might delay over subtle analysis of our feelings were it not that I have well-nigh said enough. I doubt, too, whether any of us indulged in "feelings" to any appreciable extent. We were all too excited at the prospect of returning home to comfortable quarters and good food to have room for any regrets at leaving the desolate bleakness of the North behind us. We had been subsisting on beans and bacon for so many months, that when we at last sat down to a civilized meal we ate till we were fairly ashamed of ourselves. The only little grain of salve which we could apply

to our consciences was that we were all gluttons together.

Another eight days of very fair passage took us to Unalashka. None of us had stopped at St. Michaels. It had no attractions to turn our eyes from home. We spent a couple of days at Dutch Harbour coaling and taking in provisions. There we took on board, also, a cargo of whalebone, valued at \$40,000, and all taken from two whales that had recently been caught. After leaving there we spent ten days in the Pacific, which grievously belied its name on that occasion. The gold which had so weighted down the *P. B. Weare* was a mere trifle in the more expansive *Portland*, and she was so lightly laden that she rolled horribly on the continuous heavy swell.

The richest men on board were once more the worst sufferers. Many a man who would have given his whole pile to be able "to get out and walk," lay helpless as a baby. The possession of much wealth is no cure or solace in sea-sickness, and most of the miners were fearfully sick. Some of the Americans were the limpest-looking rags I ever saw after we were two days out from Unalashka. One great big burly miner was convinced he was going to die, and it needed constant watching to prevent him from jumping overboard.

However, even the Pacific was crossed at last, and we arrived at Seattle safe—if not sound. The



scene there beggars description. Our fame had preceded us, though ours was the first steamer to return from the Yukon. The crowd of people was a sight to see. I believe the whole town turned out to greet us. The reporters were absolutely merciless, and a source of very great annoyance. Nothing would shake them off. Threats, expostulations and entreaties were alike in vain. "For pity's sake, man," I cried, "let me get ashore at any rate." But they clung to us like limpets. "Look here," I cried at last in desperation, heading for the nearest hotel, "I have been for two years in a country where the only drink is poison. Let me at least have a thimbleful of good Scotch whisky before I suffer the torment of an interview." Six men accompanied me to the bar, and each one simultaneously planked down twenty-five cents on the counter, and six voices exclaimed in chorus: "Say, Miss, give this man a drink!"

One of them subsequently described the scene as follows:

"When the steamer came to this port the miners put their bags on their shoulders and walked down the gang-plank in the presence of a vast throng of Seattle people assembled to see the great pile of treasure from the rich fields of the far North. A miner with only \$5000 in his bag easily carried his fortune. Twenty thousand dollars in two bags is a good load for any stalwart man, no matter if he



PHOTOGRAPH OF THE INTERIOR OF THE POST OFFICE THE TAGAGS WERE SEEN PAGE 174



has worked where the mercury falls to 60° below zero. Two men used all their strength in carrying a strapped blanket, in which was about \$50,000. The few with the big fortunes, \$100,000 and over, had to hire help to get their precious possessions to a safe place of storage in Seattle." The account is a trifle "coloured," but is on the whole fairly accurate.

And so it ended. The two years were over ; I and all of us had been eye-witnesses and actors in one of the most astonishing pieces of pioneering that has ever been known. We had been alternately and at once guardians of the law, Her Majesty's representatives, Arctic explorers, pioneers in a new and unknown country, gold-miners, and a host of other things besides. All these things men have been before, and will surely often be again. But what made the Klondyke business so unique was not only the richness of the strike, not only the isolation of the country, but the fact that we had been for months before the outside world knew anything of it or us, and without any conspiracy to silence on our part, in undisputed possession of a secret whose disclosure seems to have sent the greater part of the English-speaking world temporarily crazy. For the time being Klondyke has taken the place of the North Pole in people's thoughts and imagination. An eminent member ,

of the Geographical Society was even heard to exclaim in awed tones that it was "lucky Nansen got back before Klondyke came on the scene!" And yet there was nothing particularly heroic about the discovery. We of the Police were merely doing our duty ; it was only by a fortunate coincidence that we were there at the time ; and there is certainly nothing heroic about the ordinary miner. He risks his life for no scientific enterprise ; he faces danger to conquer no foe ; he seeks for neither notoriety nor glory ; he merely seeks to fill his pockets. And yet on our return we find ourselves idolized by the gaping crowd, objects of envious admiration to the fair sex, hunted down by newspaper men, and pestered to death by inquisitive friends—and strangers—who appear to think that we hold the talisman that shall make them all rich or at least important in the eyes of their less presumptuous neighbours.

It has been a strange experience from start to finish, and the last part, which I have just described, has not been the least curious of it all. Whether it will prove eventually to have been, for me, merely an episode or whether it will have more lasting results, time alone can show. But be that as it may, my own personal experiences as a Pioneer of the Klondyke end here, and it is only fitting that this narrative should also be now brought to a close.

# APPENDIX I

## TEMPERATURES AT "FORTY MILE"

Taken officially by Mr. Hayne on a Negretti and Zambra's

- Instrument (Fahrenheit) Freezing-point = + 32°.

Month and Year	Average Maximum Daily Temperature.	Average Minimum Daily Temperature.	Maximum recorded during the month.	Minimum recorded during the month.
1895.				
November	+ 12'98	- 1'18	+ 39'5 (8th)	- 38'0 (17th)
December	- 9'7	- 25'69	+ 9'0 (15th)	- 52'0 (24th)
1896.				
January	- 30'66	- 47'0	- 8'8 (10th & 30th)	- 73'0 (26th)
February	- 11'66	- 36'7	+ 24'5 (21st)	- 62'0 (11th)
March	+ 0'5	- 5'4	+ 39'0 (14th)	- 35'0 (20th)
April	+ 2'5	- 3'26	+ 48'0 (17th)	- 38'0 (4th)
May	+ 53'01	+ 28'43	+ 65'0 (9th & 24th)	+ 5'0 (1st, 2nd & 3rd)
June	+ 66'3	+ 39'45	+ 80'5 (30th)	+ 28'5 (2nd)
July	+ 70'23	+ 44'24	+ 82'25 (1st)	+ 33'5 (27th)
August	+ 63'5	+ 40'34	+ 75'5 (13th)	+ 29'0 (31st)
September	+ 52'01	+ 33'65	+ 67'5 (19th)	+ 5'5 (30th)
October	+ 34'08	+ 18'2	+ 54'0 (20th)	- 5'0 (5th)
November	+ 2'29	- 16'26	+ 22'5 (2nd & 3rd)	- 39'0 (29th)
December	- 6'0	- 19'21	+ 9'0 (26th)	- 40'0 (15th)
1897.				
January	- 8'36	- 21'6	+ 20'0 (18th)	- 50'0 (22nd)
February	- 2'85	- 9'8	+ 29'0 (27th)	- 31'0 (5th)
March	+ 11'1	- 12'91	+ 39'5 (23rd)	- 54'0 (16th)
April	+ 36'2	- 15'4	+ 49'0 (19th)	- 4'5 (5th)
May	+ 50'72	+ 30'82	+ 75'0 (31st)	+ 11'0 (9th)
June (1st to 19th)	+ 70'0	+ 41'86	+ 80'5 (9th)	+ 37'0 (5th, 6th & 13th)
Total for the above period	+ 24'96	+ 4'66	+ 82'25 (July '96)	- 73'0 (Jan. '96)

The above table shows at a glance the variations of temperature for the twenty months from Nov. 1895 to the middle of June 1897. The highest temperature recorded was  $82.25^{\circ}$  on July 1, 1896, and the lowest  $-73^{\circ}$  (*i.e.*  $105^{\circ}$  of frost) on Jan. 26 of the same year, thus giving the enormous range of  $155^{\circ}$ . All these readings were taken in the shade. It will be observed that from the beginning of November 1895 to the end of April 1896, and from the beginning of November 1896 to the end of March 1897, the *average* maximum temperature was below freezing, whilst during the same periods the *average* minimum temperature was below zero. For no less than six out of twenty months the average maximum temperature was below zero also, whilst for five only was the average minimum above freezing.

Coming to closer details, the above table (3rd column) shows that from the end of November 1895 to the end of February 1896 it never once thawed, whilst all through January 1896 the thermometer stood below zero. The following winter was even worse, for it never once thawed from the end of October to the beginning of March, though the thermometer rose above zero on one or more occasions each month. The average maximum temperature for November 1896 was only  $2.29^{\circ}$  as compared with  $12.98^{\circ}$  in 1895. A notable fact in connection with the second winter is that March

(average minimum —  $12.91^{\circ}$ ) was colder than February ( $-9.8^{\circ}$ ).

Coming to the last column we see that there were only two months out of the twenty in which there was no frost (viz. July 1896 and June 1897), whilst in thirteen months the minimum reading was below zero. The bottom line of all gives the appalling result that the average maximum temperature for the whole period was  $7.4^{\circ}$  *below freezing*, whilst the average minimum was only  $4.66^{\circ}$  above zero.

The fact that these readings were taken officially by Mr. Hayne places them beyond all suspicion of exaggeration, and they form, in my opinion, an extremely interesting and instructive commentary on the conditions under which mining is carried on on the Yukon.

H. W. T.



## APPENDIX II

### THE COST OF GETTING TO THE KLONDYKE

THIS is a subject on which it is, unfortunately, impossible to give definite or reliable information. The most that can be done is to indicate what has been the cost during the past two seasons, and what changes may be expected.

There are four routes. First and easiest in most ways, though considerably the longest, when the route is open, is that travelled over in the preceding pages—*via* Seattle or Victoria, B. C. across the Pacific to Unalashka, thence to St. Michaels, and so up the Yukon.\* Then there is a route through the Lynn Canal, over the White Pass, into the chain of lakes in which the Yukon has its source, and so down the stream from the head-waters. It is impossible to give any prices here, as from Juneau, or at any rate very soon afterwards, it is a case of individual effort and arrangement all the way. The only help that can be hired is Indian portorage, with occasional "horse-power." This

must be bargained for on the best terms procurable, and is generally very expensive. The third route is over the Chilkat Pass, starting from Dyea and subsequently striking Lake Lindemann. The river by this route is stated to be generally open by June 1, and the distance from tidal water to Dawson is about 750 miles. Those who elect these routes must bear in mind that they will have to build their own boats, and should study the list of tools previously given. By these routes baggage must be reduced to a minimum, and it will be found exceedingly difficult to take in the requisite year's provisions. The climb over the Chilkat Pass is 3600 feet up, and 1500 feet down. Horses have been got over the White Pass, but not, I believe, over the Chilkat. The fourth route is by way of the Stickeen river and Teslin lake, and is said to be comparatively easy, but very little is known about it, and no reliable prices can be quoted. The river Stickeen, according to Dr. Dawson, has the advantage of being navigable for flat-bottomed boats as far as Telegraph Creek (about 150 miles), and from that point to Teslin lake (another 150 miles) travelling is said to be easy, but very little is known of the country. From Teslin lake navigation is said to be possible for stern-wheel steamers the whole way up to the mouth of the Yukon.

But whichever route is selected, there still remains the question of getting to the Pacific, for

that portion of the journey is common ground to all the subsequent routes for those starting from England. I think the best advice that can be given is to put oneself entirely into the capable hands of Messrs. Thos. Cook & Son, who will make all arrangements for the journey to the Pacific Coast—and I should not be at all surprised to hear that their well-known enterprise will soon lead to “personally conducted tours” to the Klondyke! This, however, is merely a surmise of my own. The route by which they will take you is either from London to Montreal or New York, and thence by the C. P. R., or across the States, to Vancouver or Seattle. The following are the charges:

	Saloon and First- Class.	Steerage and “Colonist.”
		£ s. d.
From Liverpool to Montreal ...	£10 10s. to £18 18s.	5 5 0
„ „ „ New York . .	£15 to £35	5 5 0
	(according to time of year.)	
„ Southampton to New York	£15 and upwards	5 10 0
„ Montreal to Seattle .	£14 12s. 10d.	10 13 9
„ New York to „ .	£14 12s. 10d.	11 5 0
„ „ „ „ Vancouver ...	£14 2s. 7d.	11 5 0
„ Quebec „ „ ..	—	15 18 9
		(lowest.)

Roughly speaking, the use of a saloon and first-class direct to Seattle comes to about £25, and steerage and third-class to about £16. Beyond that fares are very uncertain, and arrangements can,

•at present, only be made on arrival on the Pacific Coast. • Previous to last season, £30 was charged from Seattle to Forty Mile ; last season started at £35, but it is rumoured that as much as £200 was asked.

Mr. Hayne tells me that "the cost of travelling from Seattle to St. Michaels *was* \$100, and another \$100 from there on to Dawson." He continues: "The price of a passage is altering all the time. It was raised last summer, and if more steamers are put on it may go down again, although I hardly think it. In fact I expect it will go up higher." Inquiries at the office of the High Commissioner for Canada only elicited the courteous statement that "from Seattle to Cudahy last season was £35. . . . No doubt next season the facilities for reaching the Klondyke country will be on a much more adequate scale than heretofore." Messrs. Cook & Son write: "A number of steamers are preparing for the trade next year ; if they are in excess of the demand for accommodation rates will be lowered ; on the other hand, if there are more intending passengers than berths available, rates of passage may go to any figure." Probably the Emigration Office are not far wrong in putting the minimum cost from England at £100, but, as will be seen, it is utterly impossible to do more than indicate what has been and what may be.

As to the other routes nothing can be said. They

are certainly cheaper and shorter, but beyond that, "everything depends on whether the roads through the Passes will have been constructed by the Government or not . . . . There are various interests concerned desirous of facilitating travel; at the moment nothing appears to be decided." (Cook.) See also pp. 161-2 *supra*.

That is the sum-total of the results of careful inquiries. One thing at all events is abundantly clear—that the poor man has no chance. Allowing for all possible contingencies of travel and provisions, the estimate already arrived at of the absolute necessity of being in possession of something like \$1000, is probably not far wrong.

H. W. T.